

## **CALLED BY THE EARTH: WOMEN IN SUSTAINABLE FARMING**

**SUSAN D. BLUM**

*The University of Notre Dame, Indiana*

### **ABSTRACT**

When people think of farmers, they usually think of men. Iconic images of farming might include rough, burly guys using heavy equipment. But nowadays, more women have become farmers, especially in contexts of sustainable food. Using the life stories of three such women, I show how they came to this work and what it means. It is much more of a calling than a conventional form of work, precipitated by crises, illuminated by epiphanies, and benefiting from skills accumulated in these women's previous work life. Their work may be summed up as redemptive.

One of the most important resources that a garden makes available for use, is the gardener's own body. A garden gives the body the dignity of working in its own support. It is a way of rejoining the human race.

—*Wendell Berry*

The old and honorable idea of "vocation" is simply that we each are called, by God, or by our gifts, or by our preference, to a kind of good work for which we are particularly fitted. Implicit in this idea is the evidently startling possibility that we might work willingly, and that there is no necessary contradiction between work and happiness or satisfaction.

—*Wendell Berry*

When people in the contemporary United States think of farmers, they usually think of men. Iconic images of farming might include burly guys operating John

Deere equipment, their hats grimy and their grips rough. But in the contemporary food world, increasing numbers of women have become farmers, especially in the smaller contexts of sustainable food. Using the life stories of three women who farm, I show how they arrived at this livelihood and what it means.

We might look at farming as labor. But the women I interviewed discuss their farming work in terms that are appropriate for a calling. Of course there is much labor—back-breaking, sun-drenched, sweat-filled labor. There are some weeks in which they struggle to harvest everything, as crops ripen simultaneously. The money is always tight. But the satisfactions they experience go well beyond mere labor. There is *meaning* and *worth* and *value* in their knowledge, strength, planning, and community. For them, this is in contrast to other forms of paying work.

This article will ask how these three women became farmers, and why (see also Bjorkhaug & Blekesaune, 2007; Boyd, Mulvihill, & Myles, 1991; Thompson, 2007). In the process we can consider what it means to them, and also the relationship between “doing gender” (Butler, 1990; Deutsch, 2007; McGehee, Kim, & Jennings 2007; Pilgeram, 2007; Trauger, 2004; West & Zimmerman, 1987) and farming.

In all three cases, a crisis of some sort—the woman’s own mental or physical health or that of her family—led to a kind of redemption, by means of a return to her childhood farming life but with new ideals regarding how this farming should be done, and after half a lifetime of other work experiences. The satisfaction of bodily engagement in this work contrasts with these women’s previous experience of service labor (cf. Crawford, 2009; Sennett, 2008). Further, each is immersed in a complex network of family, friends, fellow farmers, and customers. All in all, we find these farming women articulating the agricultural, ecological, and human philosophies they live by.

The participation of women in sustainable or organic agriculture has been noted by several researchers (e.g., Sachs & Alston, 2010) and has been explained variously as stemming from ideologies of agriculture and ecology/ecofeminism (Sumner & Llewelyn, 2011), from a political ecology of nourishing (Jarosz, 2011), from nonconventional ideologies of organic farming and gender (Hall & Mogyorody, 2007), and even as the retention of fairly conventional roles (Sachs, 1996), because they begin with less farming background, with less knowledge, and hence have less power. Meares (1997) contrasts the “personal transformation” undergone by the male leaders of the sustainable agriculture movement with the relatively unchanged lives of women, as wives and mothers in supportive roles. Some even argue that women in agriculture, especially in leadership roles, occupy a role that might be characterized as that of a “third sex” (Pini, 2005). In anthropology, the gender division of labor in agriculture may be examined cross-culturally (Burton & White, 1984), revealing women’s substantial roles in smaller-scale systems. In the contemporary developed world, while industrial agriculture is dominated by men, this is less the case in alternative forms of food

production. Indeed, some of the most prominent spokespeople for local and sustainable agriculture have been women (e.g., Kingsolver, 2007; Rodale, 2010).

In the cases I identify, the explanations for the women's participation are less articulated, less confrontational, and more about the increased satisfaction in both the work itself and the fruits of the work. As people now operating under their own guidelines and regulations, the women can contribute simultaneously to their own health (mental and physical) and to the health of their communities (physical, social, and economic). Each has experienced a profound transformation.

Research develops by the collection of stories, one person's life at a time, each in multiple contexts: those of their local economy, local agriculture, local networks of teachers, learners, buyers, sellers. Gender is one factor. These narratives of childhood, crisis, epiphany, and redemption through labor demonstrate a quintessential American notion of choice, inevitability, and accident contributing to a coherent sense of self, as Charlotte Linde (1993) demonstrates in *Life Stories*. The woman's ultimate goal is that of finding her *calling*, a form of work and labor that provides economic sustenance but beyond that provides health and meaning.

## FARMERS

Stereotypes and prototypes of farmers reflect casual associations rather than deep familiarity. In the North American context, where less than 2% of the population are involved in agriculture, where industrial agriculture rolls out its enormous fields of single-cropped (monocropped) planting, and where fleets of enormous, costly items of equipment are needed to tackle the crops (plowing, planting, harvesting), it is not surprising that even traffic icons, such as signs warning of approaching farms, use illustrations of men riding tractors. It is assumed that viewers will understand this instantaneously.

Elsewhere in the world, farming may take quite different forms: men may still provide the bulk of the labor, but they may be rice farmers carrying baskets on bamboo poles, barefoot in the rice fields of Southeast Asia (Mahalder, 2011). In many settings, women are constantly involved in agricultural labor. For instance, in China, where I have conducted fieldwork for many decades, rural women spend much of their time in the fields, sometimes with babies strapped to their backs. Ideologically, agricultural work is regarded as belonging to men, even though most of it is in fact done by women. Increasingly, as men of all ages and young women leave the countryside to work in cities, middle-aged women are left to do all the work (but also see Zhang et al., 2006). In *Doi Moi*-era Vietnam, women's agricultural contributions have been shifted from their centrality under collectivization (Jacobs, 2008).

In many parts of the world, such as Germany, South Korea, and Taiwan, where small family farms remain the norm, women are involved in threshing wheat, planting and harvesting rice, picking vegetables, tending gardens, and more. Much

of the labor is still done by hand, especially where fields are too small for large items of equipment to be necessary or even useful.

Ideologies of work intertwine with ideas of who is supposed to do which kind of work. When European colonists first encountered Native Americans, for instance the Iroquois, the Europeans were shocked to see that women dominated agricultural production. A 17th-century engraving depicts women with bulky muscles grinding corn and sorting berries, looking frighteningly manly, an infant on a cradleboard nearby (Iroquois women doing agricultural work, 2009). Similarly, a photograph of French women occupying the place of draft animals during the First World War has the caption, “Heroic women of France. Hitched to the plough, cultivating the soil. All agriculture rests upon their shoulders” (Heroic women of France, 2012). Such images and captions suggest that these women’s efforts were worth noting and recording because they were in some sense unfamiliar. Yet across the world and across time, anthropologists and others have reported women in charge of harvesting, winnowing, preparing the agricultural harvest. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (2012) reminds us that “half of all farmers in the developing world are women.”

Decades of anthropological research on gathering-hunting have shown that the bulk of subsistence labor among peoples whose livelihoods best approximate those of our human preagricultural ancestors is performed by women, who are the principal gatherers as well as hunters of small mammals (Dahlberg, 1981; Lee & DeVore, 1968; Slocum, 1975). Though the division between “woman the gatherer” and “man the hunter” is cartoonishly overdrawn, the basic principle stands: women have been responsible for a large proportion of the community’s food needs.

The Neolithic revolution, when agriculture became the central means of subsistence for some human societies, greatly changed this, and modern industrial agriculture changed it even more. This is true throughout the industrialized Western world, though with some exceptions. Articulating the familiar association between agricultural labor and masculinity, in an article in *Signs* on farm tourism in Norway, Brandth and Haugen (2010: 425) state: “Most primary production in agriculture requires outdoor work, and outdoor work is coded masculine and given status. . . . Men have been regarded as the managers of farms.” They go on to say that “No matter what women do, their discursive placement as the farmer’s wife is dominant and overshadows other definitions of woman. . . . The material and the symbolic are asymmetrical, and the gender norms seem to be very persistent” (Brandth & Haugen 2010: 426).

In a symbolic system where outdoor = valuable = masculine, the present-day association with farming tends to downplay the contribution of women. Yet this is changing significantly in the 21st century. As you will see, women can take on the public, outdoor, outside, “front-stage” (Goffman, 1959) face of agriculture, when motivated by some life-changing experience, and when integrated into a community of like-minded producers and consumers.

## Farmers in the United States

At the turn of the 20th century, 41% of the U.S. workforce were involved in agriculture. At the turn of the 21st, that percentage had diminished to 1.9% (Dimitri, Effland, & Conklin, 2005; Environmental Protection Agency, 2012a). Few young people were choosing agriculture as a career. Clearly, a society cannot easily endure without significant agricultural expertise. To address the problem of the aging population of farmers, in 2009 the United States implemented a “Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program,” with a budget of \$17 million in competitive grants (National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, 2011; USDA announces funding, 2009; USDA, Pennsylvania State invest in training new farmers, 2009).

The agricultural configuration is currently changing. For instance, the category of “beginning farmers,” according to the USDA (Ahearn & Newton, 2009), has been growing. A 2009 report (Ahearn & Newton, 2009) showed that

- Approximately one-fifth of all farms have a principal operator who is a beginning farmer;
- Beginning farmers account for approximately 10% of the value of U.S. agricultural production;
- Beginning farmers, like all farmers, tend to be white, non-Hispanic, and male, though beginning farmers are more likely than established farmers to be female, nonwhite, or Hispanic;
- Beginning farmers are younger than established farmers (32% over age 55, compared to 63% of established farmers);
- The farms of beginning farmers are smaller on average than established farms; and
- Beginning farmers are more likely to have four-year college degrees.

According to official estimates, 42% of “operators” on all farms are women, but only 11% are “principal operators.” On established farms the figure is 10%, but on “beginning farms” it is 16% (Ahearn & Newton, 2009). In 2011, there were 942,000 women farmers in the United States (Langelier, 2011). Though only a small percentage of the total number of farmers, this is not an insignificant figure.

In order to understand better what these figures mean, it is worthwhile to place them in the broader context of the principal types of agriculture.

## TYPES OF AGRICULTURE

We might divide contemporary U.S. agriculture into three broad divisions: industrial, organic, and sustainable agriculture.

## Industrial Agriculture

Called by its detractors “Big Farming” or “Big Food,” industrial agriculture is much like other industries. It seeks economies of scale and ever-greater efficiencies, concentrating on short-term output based on inputs. Energy, fertilizer, pesticides, herbicides, labor, and equipment must be balanced year by year. Labor is simply a cost like all others.

Industrial farming applies to the production of meat, eggs, milk, and plants, and is often credited with supplying most of the food needed to sustain the earth’s ever-increasing population. It relies on government subsidies on water and transportation, and price support for commodity crops, and is responsible for many environmental and sometimes health problems, as when salmonella outbreaks traceable to the mixing of livestock and plants occur. Further, it depends on a migrant labor force that is officially not legal but is required to supply the labor needed in this system. Those who run the huge industrial farms may be more like ordinary business people than traditional farmers.

## Organic Agriculture

By contrast, organic agriculture aims to factor in the long-term consequences of each choice, to avoid artificial inputs (in form of synthetic fertilizers or pesticides), and to be ecologically more aware. Since the 1990s, organic agriculture has been growing quickly. Officially recognized certification via the National Standards on Organic Agricultural Production and Handling—the National Organic Program, NOP for short—began in the United States in 2000 (Environmental Protection Agency, 2012b), though it is regarded as costly by very small-scale farmers. Many farmers I know scoff at the certification process, sometimes because of its expense and sometimes because their own standards are far more stringent than those required by the NOP.

While organic farming is a fast-growing sector fueled by great demand, tensions exist between what Michael Pollan (2006) termed “industrial organic” farmers and small farmers. Those who emphasize the *local* and small-scale dimensions of organic farming, including biodiversity of fields, point to the similarity in industrial practices and the large scale of conglomerate-run “organic” farms, where the letter of the requirements for organic certification is satisfied but not the spirit behind it. Some companies have huge monocropped fields—one conventional and one organic—side by side. The relationship among different sorts of “organic” agriculture is not settled (e.g., Goldberger, 2011).

In summer 2012, a controversy emerged at the National Organic Standards Board conference. Debates and votes on the acceptance or rejection of specific inorganic ingredients, such as baking soda or carrageenan, dominated the meeting (Strom, 2012). Representatives from larger companies tended to vote to accept a broader set of ingredients than did those representing small producers.

This ongoing tension between official organic and a more off-the-radar organic movement has caused many to opt instead for the term *sustainable*.

### **Sustainable Agriculture**

Sustainable agriculture has no certification process and might rather be regarded as a philosophical approach that looks not merely at commodity production but also at its effects on workers, consumers, and the entire environmental context. Diverse approaches might include attention to permaculture, biodynamic principles, intensive French cultivation, diversification of crops, use of alternative energy, minimization of water consumption, improved treatment of workers and animals, and a number of experimental techniques (Agricultural Sustainability Institute, 2012). Sustainability is almost a code word for the approach of a group of like-minded producers and consumers governed by shared beliefs and needing no official recognition.

### **LOCAL CONTEXT**

To situate the narratives of the women profiled below, it is helpful to know something not only about the philosophical universe of farming but also about the region within which these women operate.

I write in the context of a region known as “Michiana,” at the border of southwestern Michigan and Northern Indiana in the Midwest of the United States. Michiana is known for agriculture, especially fruit trees and small farms in Michigan and corn and soy production in Indiana, with a hearty smattering of dairy and meat production. The local food movement has been making its way into this relatively low-income area, with a Farmers Market, a local-food co-op, Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) shares (in which consumers pay a seasonal fee to a producer and receive whatever is produced, usually weekly, sharing the production costs up-front), restaurants touting locally sourced foods, and more. Though the center of this region hosts an internationally renowned university, the area has much in common with other Rust Belt areas that lost industrial production as many as five decades ago. South Bend, the heart of this region, was built in part on the base of automaker Studebaker, which closed 50 years ago (Glinton, 2012).

Slowly rebuilding with new technology, small manufacturing, health industries, and the “knowledge” economy, the area is also beginning to recognize the advantage of its agricultural offerings.

I am a long-standing member and Board member of the Purple Porch Co-op (PPC), an organization begun by a few friends in 2009 to connect producers and consumers by providing a reliable and well-understood market for the farmers. Consumers have full transparency, and order weekly online from specific growers. Distribution takes place once a week, at a permanent location. The producers and

consumers meet face to face and discuss everything from the amendments made to the soil to local politics or mutual friends. Farm tours are popular. At the time this article is being written, the co-op is in the process of making a transition to a retail store. It has at least 200 people who order regularly and is attempting to persuade everyone to buy “shares” as “member-owners.” A general manager is paid very modestly for an estimated quarter-time job, though he and many other committed members invest up to 10 or more additional hours of voluntary labor a week.

I met the three farmers discussed below through my interaction at the co-op, visited them at their farms, and interviewed them formally (following Institutional Review Board [IRB] protocols for the protection of human subjects). I recorded the conversation with Marianne and took extensive notes during all three interviews. I have made every effort to ensure that the narratives set off from the rest of the text as block quotations reflect the exact words of my informants.

I speak with these women every week, as I have done for at least three years. I was interested in them because none of them is a secondary producer, assistant, or “farmer’s wife,” or holds any of the more conventional positions held by women in North American farming. I wanted to know how they got to this position. What were the paths that led to our Wednesday evening exchanges?

### **MARIANNE C.: “IF YOU CAN’T PRONOUNCE IT, I WON’T USE IT”**

Marianne is a strong, jovial woman in her early 50s. She and her husband Mike ride Harley-Davidson motorcycles for fun. She is extremely close to her large family, and has become transformed by her understanding of the relationship between healthy food and individual health. When I said I was asking about women and farming and wanted to challenge the idea of women as merely farmers’ wives, she emphasized that she is a truck driver’s wife, not a farmer’s wife!

On the modest one-fourth-acre cultivated area on her farm in rural southwest Michigan, she showed me the following: a pea fence, lemon cucumbers, eggplant, basil, arugula, peppers, watermelon, radishes, chard, lettuce, French melons, Bilko and savoy cabbage, grapes, kale, green beans, tomatoes, horseradish, asparagus, scarlet runner beans, Italian beans, blue lake beans, yellow squash, strawberries, raspberries, Japanese sweet potatoes, sweet potatoes, blueberries, French shallots, kohlrabi, onions, chives, sage, midget Chinese corn, and carrots. She also has a “salad bar” in the shade of the garage where she can grow greens all summer long. When I went to see Marianne’s farm in summer 2011, it had been a very good year.

Marianne grew up as one of five kids on a five-acre farm in Elkhart, Indiana. Though she lived in Florida for a while, she and Mike bought a house and land near her family.

I had been an information systems manager at an RV [recreational vehicle] company, but quit in 2004 because I didn’t like the driven, self-absorbed person I’d become.



It took me two years to get the old Marianne back: baker, gardener, canner. I tried different jobs.

Sitting quietly in 2004 to be with God, I heard God say the word “bread.” I didn’t want this. Bread is its own entity. I believed I had to delve in. It’s ironic. I make cookies, muffins; I especially like gardening. I like the feel and smell outside. You always come back to what you started with.

In 2005, people kept talking about how expensive organic food was. My sister-in-law got cancer, but said it was too expensive to eat organic. I wanted to show that it was too expensive *not* to eat organic.

I dug up my back yard, and made three and a half trenches with the Bobcat. Took off all the topsoil. I rototilled the dirt for a year and with grass as compost and let it sit for a month. Over time, I made nine patches, the last five and a half by rototilling.

The first year, I planted 83 heads of broccoli. One of my goals was family health: Broccoli is very good for us and organic is very expensive. The bunnies got it. I planted kohlrabi: the bunnies also got that. I had no fences.

My dad told me that my sweet corn wouldn’t turn out because I needed nitrogen, and needed to fence. I didn’t know about the dirt. Ultimately I learned, “I have to grow the dirt; the dirt will grow the food.”

There is a master gardener for this area. I kept learning new principles and techniques from that consultant and many others.

In 2006, I started rototilling and leaving the grass. I got organic fertilizer from a local farming supply; my dad had done business with the current owner’s father.

In 2007, I used this organic fertilizer on two rows. It did good. But it is very expensive fertilizer, so I had to start selling my produce in order to afford the fertilizer. In 2008, I sold \$20 of vegetables. It spread by word of mouth. Mike and I are still learning.

My dad passed away and I used my inheritance to buy a rototiller I could handle. In 2007–2008 the family kept dying. It was therapeutic to be in the garden. I believed I needed to stop buying organic fertilizer: It had bone meal and blood meal. But how did I know it was from organic animals?

I took a class with Joyce at the Natural Health Center and learned that the gut reveals the health of the body. I bought lots of books and learned from a number of people. The manager of Purple Porch Co-op, Greg Koehler, found me at Local Harvest in May 2009. I found Joe Gady of Farming for Life.

An “organic” farmer, Gady (2012) states his mission as follows:

Our goal is restoring the soil and the life therein to sustainability, so that outside inputs are required less and less. The high nutrient density of our produce and value added products promote sustainability of health in our customers. We grow heirloom varieties, stimulate soil biological activity with the addition of microbial & mycorrhizal mixes and enzymes, humic acids & sea minerals, high quality compost, and plowing down of green manures. We also regularly spray the leaves with foliar sprays that contain microbes, humic acids and sea minerals.

With this articulated vision for farming, Marianne now had an explicit philosophy to guide her:

The meeting with Joe changed everything for me. I learned from him and then continued to educate myself about the health of the land. I am growing good dirt, using beneficial nematodes (20 million) and green sand from New Jersey to keep the dirt moist. (I get it from Ginger Valley, a local plant and garden store.)

I tell parents if they can do nothing else, they should get kids off milk unless it's organic.

Produce has a long way to go in terms of packaging. There's a grocery store in Texas where nothing is packaged. For my produce CSA [Community-Supported Agriculture—a share of her farm], I tried to find packaging that at least is reusable. I found post-consumer cookie bags, and the cost is not too outrageous. I bake cookies, advertising that “if you can't pronounce it, I won't use it.”

My dad had passed away. Mike's dad didn't understand organic.

Marianne bakes at home in Michigan for Monday sales, at her sister's in Elkhart, for her Indiana markets. (The two states are adjacent but have separate regulations.) She runs out of time for baking. She had no time off the whole month of June. She recognizes that she is developing her business. But in the name of health and sanity, she took time off, and went out to the garden.

Marianne has been busy writing the proposal for a community commercial organic kitchen that can “incubate” new enterprises, working her way through the health department and agriculture department bureaucracies (with their contradictory demands). During the summer, she sells at three different markets: PPC, Granger Farmers Market, French market in Niles on Thursday (cookies). She is constantly improving her practices, learning, and expanding her enterprises.

### **LYDIA K.: ON THE FOOD JOURNEY TO AN ALMOST PERFECT LIFE**

Lydia is a busy woman. She agreed to give me an hour if we walked around the farm but was not able to sit and speak with me. It had been a cool summer in 2011, but she showed me all the ways they were able to cope with less-than-ideal weather conditions.

Like Marianne, Lydia also grew up on a farm, though she began far from Michiana, in Moab, southeast Utah:

We were isolated by 60 miles so we had to be self-sufficient. There was no grocery store until I went to high school, and instead we mostly bartered. The ground was sand. We used plastic to hold nutrients if it rained, and my mother used horse troughs (6 feet by 2.5 feet) as container gardens, especially for asparagus. We could grow beans and we sold horses. Though there was a long

season, vegetables were smaller. Squash and pumpkins served as food; chickens were for meat and for sale.

My father preached about the dangers of white eggs, and I grew up on the eggs of heritage chickens. My father aimed to preserve rare breeds of chickens with smaller eggs. We got 1,500 chicks every spring and sold the “Easter eggs”: pink, purple, green, polka dot eggs.

In 1995, I moved to Arizona, and then followed my first husband to Indiana, where he had family. Beginning as a “Kelly Girl” [temporary employee] for a month, I got a three-month contract at a tobacco company and then was hired full time, working there for eight years. I worked outside on promotions.

It was exciting. We went to NASCAR races [car racing gatherings], and it was a very social and fun life. I traveled a lot, and smoked. I got tired of that stressful life, and started farming.

I always grew things, even if it was just in pots outside my apartment. Jamie [her current, second husband] and I work the farm at my in-laws’ place, and have a family business. His parents once owned 200 acres, but sold much of the land for housing in [the new suburb of] Granger. They drained some of the land. Now they have eight acres with an evergreen fence that serves as a wind barrier. Some of the land is boggy and muddy, which we use to grow celery, broccoli, and cauliflower. Our parents’ house is on the farm; my mother-in-law grows the flowers on her land. We live two miles south.

We are gradually expanding, adding hoop houses and greenhouses, using inexpensive, scavenged materials if possible. We reuse things as much as we can and don’t buy a lot. This keeps prices low. We don’t finance anything, and have done it little by little. We use what we have and can do it our way.

They grow a great variety of crops, including chard, red noodle beans, and green beans. They have pear and plum trees. They grow mulberries, cabbages, raspberries, collards, tomatoes, basil, rosemary, winter squash, tomatoes, potatoes, watermelon, sweet potato, and leeks. This diversity of products is characteristic of nonindustrial, sustainable small farming.

Lydia is articulate about the importance of good food for health, speaking in a somewhat libertarian way about taking care of oneself through staying healthy. She illustrates their basic principle of no spraying of chemicals. The day I visited, butterflies flitted everywhere, revealing a healthy ecosystem.

I squash bugs. If the bugs get completely out of control, we use red pepper spray. We never water or weed the blackberries, blueberries, and raspberries. We move the planting around and allow some [land] to lie fallow. For example, we rotate the pumpkin patch. We till, and compost the cover crop. We rotate the compost heap. We till the unkempt area, and then re-till. We burn it to kill weeds. Next year we will plant something else.

In the fenced-in deer-proof area, irrigated with PVC, we grow cherry and heirloom tomatoes on three sides.

We have built a movable cold frame. We built our first greenhouse (72 feet long) using \$35 of scrap material; we use it to grow lettuces and start seeds. At

our house we have a greenhouse that is twice as long, with shelves. We sow directly beets, carrots (40 days), radishes (28 days): plant every two weeks.

I asked about you-pick farming (where customers come and pick the fruits and vegetables themselves):

It's too expensive, because you need a different kind of insurance. Because it is a private residence it is complicated. We have liability and insurance; it's private land. We can't hire anyone. We have to make a choice: spend \$1,500 on a greenhouse, where we can grow more, or spend it on insurance.

We could do green beans easily. Raspberries in the fall are expensive because they have no shelf life.

Okra grows abundantly on one patch near the entrance to the farm. Okra doesn't have a big market, though the ethnic markets are a possibility. It is a popular ingredient in Middle East and Asian food. It yields a bushel each time, and can be [eaten] steamed, raw, pickled, fried with cornmeal and bacon. I have a sideline: I pick, can, and freeze okra each week. Okra can be dehydrated and used as a gluten-free thickener.

We spoke about their daily, weekly, and especially seasonal schedule. I knew that Lydia has made great adjustments in order to extend the growing season:

Monday and Friday are distribution days, and we go to markets on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday. On Friday we picked for 16 hours for the Saturday market, though we pick the greens early on Saturday. On Sundays we rest.

At the height of the summer, Jamie is here at the crack of dawn harvesting, working 16 to 18 hours a day. I pick up and distribute.

From July to August, we are completely occupied with harvesting, and with the CSA and the many markets. We also do a second planting for fall. By September, production is down some, though we are busy cultivating the fall harvest.

In October, our work is harvesting, curing potatoes and onions by placing them on large screens to dry out in the sun.

For other crops, we have a "chill closet" that Jamie and his father built. It chills immediately. We fill large coolers with vegetables and frozen water bottles to keep leafy greens fresh. We have cold storage in ground; we can harvest through December. We would like to have versatile racks that are portable. Already we extend the season with plastic.

In November, we grow microgreens and harvest root vegetables. There is no planting or watering. In November and December, we sell at our markets and we distribute through our CSA.

We take off January and February. I'd like to go somewhere.

In March, we plant tomatoes and carrots from seeds. We use raised beds and can cover them, to get early crops. This year we had cucumbers, even though 2011 was a hard year for cucumbers; it was very wet; there was blight.

When I asked about women in farming, Lydia pointed out that many farmers are women, she says, in part because of the flexibility, and especially in wholesale (selling to restaurants). Direct sales bring in more money.

I don't use the equipment. Jamie, his dad, his 17-year-old daughter, and his son use it. There is no way I could do this all myself. I'm not strong enough. Friends work "for food."

We have no other jobs now. Jamie's background is in landscaping and horticulture. He still works for a few special customers. In winter he plows snow. His brother also does landscaping services.

Lydia described her efforts over the previous year to create daily markets, especially for vegetables, which ripen and are picked daily. She has produce subscriptions [Community-Supported Agriculture shares], markets in five different towns, and outlets at four places in the north of her own city where there had been no such option before:

People are very interested in my food because I am local. All kinds of people, not just wealthy folks, use the markets, from [the nearby towns of] Edwardsburg, East Niles, Ocoola. People from apartments come. Students come to the one in Granger and Main Street.

I say this from making the food journey myself: it is not easy, not quick.

I am at a moment of transition. I had major surgery in October and was laid up for weeks, and am still on my way back. But I'm lucky: I have access to sunshine.

My life is nearly perfect, but it would be better with health insurance. I would like to see a study of farmers and health insurance.

Each individual has power. [I'm confident,] knowing I can do all this. I am very independent. Trial and adversity can make us see how things can happen.

### **SUSAN S.: CONNECTING HEALTH AND FOOD**

I arrived early at Susan's farm in Walkerton, Indiana, on a sunny winter day. Susan was not there yet; she was tied up at a health clinic. She had gotten second-degree burns making lasagna and thought she should find out why they were not healing. (Later she told me she used her own tincture and to the doctor's amazement the burns healed quickly.) I watched the cows wander around outside. Chickens meandered loudly among the dried, wind-blown plants. It was quiet; birdfeeders demonstrated a commitment to a diverse ecosystem.

Elegant and outspoken, Susan was born and raised on a farm in northern Illinois, but she spent many years living in cities, including Chicago. She was married for seven years to a conventional farmer; their farm was not at all like her current one. Her husband had dairy cows and a garden. They made wild strawberry jams and grew rhubarb. Susan tends to be intellectual and driven. She had been a vegetarian but looked at the data and its sponsorship, and at opposing arguments. She eats only whole food.

I am very smart, but didn't go to college until my 40s. I studied statistics and organizational/operations research. I dug efficiency, numbers, food.

I started college after my second marriage. It was not a good marriage. He took all my money and stuff. I went to college and left him after my second year (University of Illinois Chicago, UIC). I lived on nothing in a tiny house with a tiny garden north of Chicago. I grew my own food in pots on the balcony, which helped with the grocery bills.

I got an MBA from Northwestern University, Kellogg School, in my 50s. Marketing and finance were useful, international business not so much. I didn't use it for long.

After I finished my MBA, I had a series of underpaid positions, at Arlands (like Wal-Mart [a huge store that sells groceries as well as almost everything else, at a significant reduction]), where I was bored, and at a print shop where I redesigned the ordering systems. I worked at Inland Steel for five years [from] when I was 46. I was older and bright. It was hard to find a job. I made only about \$30,000. People thought I lied. I was worth \$45–55,000. I worked at [two industrial small manufacturing offices]; I was a program manager. I found out I was being paid \$18,000 under the *minimum* for the job. I started to wise up and demand a higher salary. I threatened a lawsuit and got a raise.

At [her last position, also industrial], I used the higher salary from my previous job to earn a six-figure salary, but was bored to tears. I lived to shop online. I took two months to negotiate a voluntary layoff and severance pay. With the good buyout, I bought this farm for the land—82 acres. One thing led to another: first I built the house, which I designed, then the greenhouse, then I added a dairy operation. I raise chickens, bake, and sell facial and bath products. I sell produce too, though I hate to garden.

Bit by bit my farming background returned. Despite the nice package I had negotiated upon retirement, it was not enough to live on. Then I got my first booth at the Farmers Market and lived on one-fifth of my previous salary.

I had severe hypoglycemia; all vegetarians develop insulin resistance from heavy carbs. The only food that has more protein than carbs is soy. I go to a certified organic mill to get feed for chicks (flax, alfalfa, fish meal), but I don't use soy. Soy blocks absorption. In Asian agriculture, it is used to feed the ground/soil. People eat only small amounts. It is a phytoestrogen.

I drank raw milk and felt better. It was hard to find good quality raw milk exactly as I wanted it: grass fed (no grain) in glass jars (no plastic), and certified organic, so I decided to do it myself. I wanted soy-free eggs, and had to raise my own.

Bio-organic canned tomatoes in glass cost \$9 a quart at Bambers [a local imported food specialty store]. I couldn't afford those.

I use biodynamic principles, but am not certified organic because it is expensive.

Biodynamic agriculture is a holistic philosophical system based on the work of Rudolf Steiner, who also founded the Waldorf schools. Adding nutrients to the soil for greater health of the farm and those who eat its produce is part of common practice in biodynamic agriculture (Biodynamic Farming and Gardening

Association, 2012). Like Marianne, Susan operates not simply by intuition but by following research principles.

There is a big market in Europe but I don't want to ship there. I'm happy with my worms and my soil. I use DD500, 501, compost 502, 508: inoculants. The principle of biodynamic organic agriculture is to increase the amount and density of nutrients. There is a progression from conventional to organic to biodynamic organic farming.

Hybrid tomatoes were the first GMOs [Genetically Modified Organisms]. I use open pollinated seeds and raise my own seeds. The seeds are best for my own ecosystem. It was a sad day that the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that life could be patented.

Aside from coffee and spices, I eat my own food, my own beef. I buy pork from a Nappanee [nearby town] farmer who ferments the feed.

In addition to biodynamic philosophy, Susan follows the principles enumerated by Dr. Weston A. Price, a dentist who advocated food systems modeled on what he reported from his study of indigenous diets worldwide, with three commonalities: raw dairy, lots of saturated fat, and fermented foods. He argued that the indigenous diet is healthy and unlike contemporary diets with crowded teeth and the need for orthodontia leaves adequate space in the mouth for teeth (Weston A. Price Foundation, 2000). Susan also dismisses the conventional wisdom that to be healthy we should “Eat Less Fat”:

I was a vegetarian—for 15 years—and my teeth were falling out. I felt terrible. I started eating fats and protein, Atkins style, and lost weight and gained a sense of well-being by eating butter.

She spoke passionately about her dismissal of the generally dominant idea that fat is an undesirable part of the diet, detailing the history of this idea. She explained that a study from Ansel Keys showing a correlation between high fat intake and chronic heart disease was doctored to eliminate countries like France and to cover up the association between high sugar consumption and heart disease. Meanwhile guidelines had been issued nationally urging reduced fat consumption. This trickled down to advice for school lunch planners and pregnant women, in part through the well-intentioned work of Senator George McGovern and a vegan intern. “It was chicanery, but sincere.”

In fact the healthiest fats for us are butter, lard, coconut oil, and palm kernel oil. We should replace carbs with fat, not protein. Doing this, I have lost 30 pounds.

In her early 70s, Susan does not do everything entirely by herself. Though she has a few employees, she is looking to close this chapter of her life. As I write, she is trying to sell the farm so she can spend the next decade traveling and just enjoying herself. Her daughter teases her when she says she'd like to buy a smaller yard, knowing Susan would be right back where she is now within a short time.

There is too much to do alone in the garden, but still it is hard to find people to hire. I had to hire enough to get the work done. I initially fenced in a half acre, then had to earn enough to pay the workers, so I doubled the area. I used plastic mulch.

I hire four part-timers in an average year. In summer they total about 60–70 hours a week.

Now there is a 21-year-old autistic neighbor boy who helps with the dairy chores. He doesn't understand the big picture. He does the feeding, which is the hard part. I'm 70, and I have a bad knee. The neighbor uses the pitchfork and gives the cattle their hay.

I had an intern for four years but he went back to college. He loves food, and cares for the garden. I hope I can keep him on to organize the others.

I'm a passionate farmer, a foodie to the nth degree. I had a restaurant 25 years ago where I made everything from scratch. It was not profitable.

Susan sells at the Purple Porch Co-op, the Farmers Market, and online. She can't sell dairy. (Raw dairy laws are extremely strict; commando-style raids are conducted in the middle of the night to shut down small raw dairy operations. See Adams, 2012; Cheese seized, 2010.)

I rent land to the Walkerton Dairy Association, which owns the equipment. I get rent. I want to get cows somewhere else. There used to be 14 families, of which seven did the milking. Now there are 50 families, and only four do the milking. (Two can't.)

I was milking twice a day, but I need a new knee. Now Mike is milking every afternoon.

The dairy is quite an operation. I get \$150 worth of dairy shares (two shares) and \$20 a month for scheduling. I have had five years with a dairy, all because I wanted a share of the neighbor's cow.

I charge what food really costs and I pay a fair wage (\$8–10).

We have the cheapest food and the highest medical bills. Do you think there might be a connection?

## COMMONALITIES

Three cases do not make a theory, but we can still learn something from looking carefully at them collectively. All of these farmers grew up on farms; after having had many other forms of work experience, they found themselves back on farms where they could draw on their past experience. In all of these cases, a health crisis or epiphany led to a radical transformation in their understanding of the importance of a certain kind of food, grown in a certain way, in conjunction with changes in health or personal circumstances. Their work constantly changes.

All of them have a variety of skills developed over a lifetime of experience, along with their childhood knowledge of farming and their very recent self-education about sustainable farming. Their small-scale local sustainable agricultural labor requires the following skills:



- Production
- Sales, markets
- Interactions
- Planning
- Finance, paperwork, accounting
- Packaging
- Communication
- Research
- Division of labor: gendered?
- Hiring and supervising employees
- Cleaning
- Decision making (which plants, how, how many, when)

All of them are integrated into networks of learning, sympathetic producers, and avid customers in multiple but not-too-dispersed markets.

### **Gender?**

None of the three women profiled here especially dwelled on the topic of gender, though when I asked her, Marianne did say she had to get a smaller plow. Does this mean that gender is (a) hidden, (b) irrelevant, or (c) so thoroughly inherent and pervasive that it does not need to be discussed?

A seminal article by West and Zimmerman (1987) laid out a way to think about “doing gender” in order to analyze its workings in social life. Twenty years later, Deutsch (2007) argued that we might consider “undoing gender” because sometimes we might find “gender irrelevance.” Sometimes gender is an essential analytic category; sometimes it is not. In the context discussed here, it is likely that there is a low-key version of women’s roles in these farmers’ Midwest lives. They live their lives, theorizing about food but not so much about identity. The physical labor of farming, and the use of heavy farm equipment, is one dimension that came up explicitly in these conversations. Others did not especially surface.

### **ADDING UP STORIES: WHAT THEY MEAN**

All these “beginning farmers” have small farms; all have multiple skills; all hire others to some extent and treat them well.

Whatever their functions “backstage,” they are all operating “front stage,” out in public. In Goffman’s terms, of *front stage* and *backstage*, in all these cases the women are adept at the front-stage presentation of themselves as farmers. In the intimacy of a face-to-face market, an advantage may go to those best able to present themselves and their work, with no advertisers, marketers, market researchers, or the like. Unlike the stereotype mentioned at the outset, in no sense do these women remain symbolically or actually inside or backstage. In fact their willingness to be

outside and in front, as well as to master so many of the dimensions of sustainable farming, may be the most significant of their many skills.

When trying to find an explanation for how individuals are led to their paths, we should consider both the material and the symbolic, the ways in which gender is being done, and the ways in which humanity is being done.

These three middle-aged, strong farmers, resolving a crisis by contributing newly found knowledge to a world of newly formed markets, are independent and interdependent. They are in some sense the executives of their small businesses, but they aim for a noncorporate model of meaningful, flexible, healthy work.

The labor of small-scale sustainable farming, with all its components, provides a livelihood, but it requires every bit of the farmer's selfhood: body, mind, heart, spirit, social network. The life stories of these three women reveal a successful quest for purpose, value, and meaning. They have followed a calling to the earth.

In a world where work is often associated with dehumanization, industrialization, neoliberalism, being a cog in the wheel, and so forth, this form of nonalienated, meaningful labor can serve as a model for some who choose to forgo higher wages for greater control and connection to work. All three of these farmers had earlier careers with higher wages.

Increasing the opportunity for more women to work as independent operators running their own farms would have advantages, for them, for consumer choice, for ecological reasons, and ultimately for the contemporary world and its work options.

For individuals running such farms, clearly the increased physical, psychological, and social health deriving from their perceived independence, their opportunity to spend time physically working outside, and their connections through networks of markets and customers has been perceived as greatly preferable to being accountable to exploitive bosses, to engaging in unhealthy stress-relieving behaviors like smoking, and being at the mercy of potentially discriminating bosses.

Sometimes images within a specific culture crystallize a complex set of organizing values and ideals. The image of farming reflects our image of humans as individuals and as workers, and of humans as participating in groups and societies. Whether stereotypes suggest that farms are dominated by men commanding industrial equipment or by angelic nurturing "earth mothers," or other common images, they reflect broadly held understanding of what is possible and what is "normal."

Women as "caring" may play out a conventional role (Jarosz, 2011), from Foucault's notion of "self-care"—a source that these farmers would never regard as relevant to their concrete lives—but there is a hard-edged practicality to them as well. This is not mere sentiment, not simply a cute form of pastime intended to create "pin money," which my grandmother taught my mother always to have. It represents a growing segment of the economy.

While philosophical and ideological matters have real-world implications, there are some obvious practical tasks that could be changed, pooled, or supported, by government, foundations, or self-organized groups. These involve the following:

- Health insurance for small farmers
- A pool of skilled, maybe retired, laborers
- Price supports for sustainable agriculture
- Apprenticeship programs for young workers
- Equipment rental for small farmers, perhaps with operators for the heavy equipment

As these farmers avoid the employment of seasonal migrant laborers, and maintain connections with their local communities, they could provide some work for young workers in communities with high levels of unemployment. Some resources already exist to provide information and knowledge of skills and opportunities (Women's Agricultural Community, 2005; Women's Agricultural Network, 2009).

Hall and Mogyorody (2007) point out that merely increasing women's involvement in labor does not in and of itself change gender relations. The women I interviewed were not radicals or revolutionaries, no matter how allied their views might be. By example they challenge ideologies of productivism and scale, allowing their work to illustrate the satisfactions of being called, one by one, by their small holdings of land and offering the fruits of their honest labor.

## REFERENCES

- Adams, M. 2012. 65-year-old California "milk man" subjected to extreme torture, hypothermia, raw sewage in LA County Jail. Retrieved from [http://www.naturalnews.com/035208\\_James\\_Stewart\\_torture\\_county\\_jail.html](http://www.naturalnews.com/035208_James_Stewart_torture_county_jail.html), November 2012.
- Agricultural Sustainability Institute. 2012. What is sustainable agriculture? Retrieved from <http://www.sarep.ucdavis.edu/sarep/about/def>, November 2012.
- Ahearn, M., & Newton, D. 2009. Beginning farmers and ranchers. Retrieved from [http://www.ers.usda.gov/media/156049/eib53\\_1\\_.pdf](http://www.ers.usda.gov/media/156049/eib53_1_.pdf), November 2012.
- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. 2012. Women in agriculture. Retrieved from <http://www.gatesfoundation.org/infographics/pages/women-in-agriculture-info.aspx>, November 2012.
- Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association. 2012. What is biodynamics? Retrieved from <https://www.biodynamics.com/biodynamics>, November 2012.
- Bjorkhaug, H., & Blekesaune, A. 2007. Masculinisation or professionalisation of Norwegian farm work: A gender neutral division of work on Norwegian family farms? *Journal of Contemporary Family Studies*, 38: 423–434.
- Boyd, M., Mulvihill, M. A., & Myles, J. 1991. Gender, power, and postindustrialism. *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 28: 407–436.
- Brandth, B., & Haugen, M. S. 2010. Doing farm tourism: The intertwining practices of gender and work. *Signs*, 35: 425–446.

- Burton, M. L., & White, D. R. 1984. Sexual division of labor in agriculture. *American Anthropologist*, 86: 568–583.
- Butler, J. 1990. *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. New York: Routledge.
- Cheese seized! Public health department raids raw dairy vendor. 2010. Retrieved from <http://eatocracy.cnn.com/2010/07/26/cheese-seized-public-health-department-raids-raw-dairy-vendor/>, November 2010.
- Crawford, M. B. 2009. *Shop class as soulcraft: An inquiry into the value of work*. New York: Penguin.
- Dahlberg, F. 1981. *Woman the gatherer*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Deutsch, F. M. 2007. Undoing gender. *Gender and Society*, 21: 106–127.
- Dimitri, C., Effland, A., & Conklin, N. 2005. The 20th century transformation of U.S. agriculture and farm policy. Retrieved from [http://www.ers.usda.gov/media/259572/eib3\\_1\\_.pdf](http://www.ers.usda.gov/media/259572/eib3_1_.pdf), November 2012.
- Environmental Protection Agency. 2012a. Demographics. Retrieved from <http://www.epa.gov/oecaagct/ag101/demographics.html>, November 2012.
- Environmental Protection Agency. 2012b. Organic farming. Retrieved from <http://www.epa.gov/agriculture/torg.html>, November 2012.
- Gady, J. 2012. Purple Porch Co-op. Retrieved from <https://www.localfoodmarketplace.com/purpleporch/Farmers.aspx?pGuid=39fc7320-20aa-4416-912f-82448626f21a>, November 2012.
- Glinton, S. 2012. A company town reinvents itself in South Bend, Ind. Retrieved from <http://www.npr.org/2012/07/05/155916837/a-company-town-reinvents-itself-in-south-bend-ind>, November 2012.
- Goffman, E. 1959. *The presentation of self in everyday life*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.
- Goldberger, J. R. 2011. Conventionalization, civic engagement, and the sustainability of organic agriculture. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 27: 288–296.
- Hall, A., & Mogyorody, V. 2007. Organic farming, gender, and the labor process. *Rural Sociology*, 72: 289–316.
- Heroic women of France. Hitched to the plough, cultivating the soil. 2012. Retrieved from [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Heroic\\_Women\\_of\\_France.\\_Hitched\\_to\\_the\\_plough,\\_cultivating\\_the\\_soil.\\_All\\_agriculture\\_rests\\_upon\\_their\\_shoulders.\\_Uncomp1\\_-\\_NARA\\_-\\_512429.tif](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Heroic_Women_of_France._Hitched_to_the_plough,_cultivating_the_soil._All_agriculture_rests_upon_their_shoulders._Uncomp1_-_NARA_-_512429.tif), November 2012.
- Iroquois women doing agricultural work: Grinding corn or dried berries. 2009. Retrieved from [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Iroquois\\_women\\_work.JPG](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Iroquois_women_work.JPG), November 2012.
- Jacobs, S. 2008. *Doi Moi* and its discontents: Gender, liberalisation, and decollectivisation in rural Viet Nam. *Journal of Workplace Rights*, 13: 17–39.
- Jarosz, L. 2011. Nourishing women: Toward a feminist political ecology of community supported agriculture in the United States. *Gender, Place and Culture*, 18: 307–326.
- Kingsolver, B. 2007. *Animal, vegetable, miracle: A year of food life*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Langelier, B. 2011. Empowering Texas women in agriculture, seminar Sept. 27th in Lubbock. Retrieved from <http://holisticmanagement.org/press-releases/empowering-texas-women-in-agriculture-seminar-sept-27th-in-lubbo/>, November 2012.
- Lee, R. B., & DeVore, I. (Eds.) 1968. *Man the hunter*. Chicago: Aldine.

- Linde, C. 1993. *Life stories: The creation of coherence*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mahalder, B. 2011. Farmer in the haor. Retrieved from [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Farmer\\_in\\_the\\_haor.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Farmer_in_the_haor.jpg), November 2012.
- McGehee, N. G., Kim, K., & Jennings, G. R. 2007. Gender and motivation for agri-tourism entrepreneurship. *Tourism Management*, 28: 280–289.
- Meares, A. C. 1997. Making the transition from conventional to sustainable agriculture: Gender, social movement participation, and quality of life on the family farm. *Rural Sociology*, 62: 21–47.
- National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition. 2011. Beginning Farmer Act sets path for future of U.S. agriculture. Retrieved from <http://westernfarmpress.com/government/beginning-farmer-act-sets-path-future-us-agriculture>, November 2012.
- Pilgeram, R. 2007. “Ass-kicking” women: Doing and undoing gender in a US livestock auction. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 14: 572–595.
- Pini, B. 2005. The third sex: Women leaders in Australian agriculture. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 12: 73–88.
- Pollan, M. 2006. *The omnivore’s dilemma: A natural history of four meals*. New York: Penguin.
- Rodale, M. 2010. *Organic manifesto: How organic food can heal our planet, feed the world, and keep us safe*. New York: Rodale.
- Sachs, C., & Alston, M. 2010. Global shifts, sedimentations, and imaginaries: An introduction to the special issue on women and agriculture. *Signs*, 35: 277–287.
- Sachs, C. E. 1996. *Gendered fields: Rural women, agriculture, and environment*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Sennett, R. 2008. *The craftsman*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Slocum, S. 1975. Woman the gatherer: Male bias in anthropology. In R. R. Reiter (Ed.), *Toward an anthropology of women*: 36–50. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Strom, S. 2012. Has “organic” been oversized? *New York Times*, July 7.
- Sumner, J., & Llewelyn, S. 2011. Organic solutions? Gender and organic farming in the age of industrial agriculture. *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, 22: 100–118.
- Thompson, M. B. 2007. Ladies of the land: A film about growing. Retrieved from [http://www.snagfilms.com/films/title/ladies\\_of\\_the\\_land](http://www.snagfilms.com/films/title/ladies_of_the_land), November 2012.
- Trauger, A. 2004. “Because they can do the work”: Women farmers in sustainable agriculture in Pennsylvania, USA. *Gender, Place and Culture*, 11: 289–307.
- USDA announces funding for beginning farmer programs. 2009. Retrieved from [http://www.agriculture.com/news/policy/USDA-announces-funding-for-beginning-farmer-programs\\_4-ar5852](http://www.agriculture.com/news/policy/USDA-announces-funding-for-beginning-farmer-programs_4-ar5852), November 2012.
- USDA, Pennsylvania State invest in training new farmers. 2009. Retrieved from <http://live.psu.edu/story/43477>, November 2012.
- West, C., & Zimmerman, D. H. 1987. Doing gender. *Gender and Society*, 1: 125–151.
- Weston A Price Foundation. 2000. Principles of healthy diets. Retrieved from <http://www.westonaprice.org/basics/principles-of-healthy-diets>, November 2012.
- Women’s Agricultural Community. 2005. Who are women in agriculture? Retrieved from <http://www.safs.msu.edu/womenag/aboutus/us.htm>, November 2012.
- Women’s Agricultural Network. 2009. About WAgN. Retrieved from <http://www.uvm.edu/wagn/?Page=about/index.html&SM=about/sub-menu.html>, November 2012.

Zhang, L., Rozell, S., Liu, C., Olivia, S., de Brauw, A., & Li, Q. 2006. Feminization of agriculture in China: Debunking the myth and measuring the consequence of women participation in agriculture. Retrieved from [http://sitesources.worldbank.org/INTWDR2008/Resources/2795087-1191427986785/ZhangL&RozelleSEtA1\\_FeminizationOfAgriInChina.pdf](http://sitesources.worldbank.org/INTWDR2008/Resources/2795087-1191427986785/ZhangL&RozelleSEtA1_FeminizationOfAgriInChina.pdf), November 2012.

Direct reprint requests to:

Susan D. Blum  
Department of Anthropology  
The University of Notre Dame  
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556  
sblum@nd.edu