

WOMEN IN FARMING:  
A SOCIAL ECONOMY OF  
MULTI-FAMILY AND  
SINGLE FAMILY FARMS  
IN SASKATCHEWAN

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WOMEN IN FARMING:  
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IN SASKATCHEWAN

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By

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study examines the experiences of forty-five women in thirty farm operations in Saskatchewan under a comparative framework. Interviews were conducted with fifteen women who live and work on conventional one- and two-family farms and with thirty women who live and work on multi-household, multi-operator, farming operations.

The field data addressed personal biography and background; involvements in farm work, off-farm work, and farm management; contributions to the mobilization of capital, land, and labour resources; experience as a family and household member; involvements in other aspects of rural community life; and women's views of farming, the future of agriculture, and the prospects for women in farming. For the thirty women from multi-household, group operations, the field investigation also addressed the circumstances surrounding participation, decision making, formal membership status, and social relations under more complex forms of organization.

This comparative approach revealed some of the interactions that take place between farm organizational structure and the experiences women have as part of this structure. This research also revealed the pervasive character of patriarchal social relations in rural Saskatchewan. The findings suggest that women from group farm operations are generally as marginalized as their counterparts on traditional one- and two-family farms. Farm organizational structure is not the only innovation required to overcome structural, cultural and social inequities in the rural landscape.

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## DEDICATION

This is dedicated to farming women,  
starting with my mother,  
who have cultivated friendships, family, and community  
to provide the social foundations of farming.

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## **Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION**

Rural agricultural communities in Saskatchewan and other parts of western Canada experienced at least a decade of severe financial crisis starting in the early 1980s. Local schools, hospitals and businesses have been closing down and family farms have been disappearing. In 1991, the Census of Agriculture counted 60,840 farms in Saskatchewan, a decrease of 4.5% from 1986, a 9.6% decrease from 1981, and a 14.3% decrease from 1976 (Statistics Canada, 1992b). Young people have been questioning the ability of rural environments to provide secure jobs and quality lifestyles. Parents are finding it difficult to encourage their children to choose a rural livelihood and residence. Few families can find the means for young people to stay in local communities or to carry on the tradition of family-based farming. Stress is running high in many communities with increased incidence of violence, domestic abuse and suicide. A declining and aging rural population makes it difficult for those that remain to respond to the social and economic challenges that must be met if family farms and rural communities are to remain intact.

In response to these situations, agricultural communities in Saskatchewan and other parts of western Canada are in the midst of a re-structuring process. Diversification is the "buzzword" for initiatives to develop new manufacturing and processing activities, rural-based businesses and new agricultural commodities and techniques. Government/agencies, community organizations, private sector businesses, and local citizens have all contributed to these initiatives. Processing plants, inland terminals, and speciality seed farms are appearing across the prairie landscape. Added to these mostly private-controlled projects are more collective endeavours designed to bring "community" back into the community in the form of jointly built and operated multi-purpose recreational or business facilities. Communities are ministered to and linked by satellite education stations, wellness (resource) centres equipped to handle minor health emergencies, and travelling para-professionals trained to help families deal with stress.

For the farm families that remain in these communities, the struggle becomes one of mobilizing the required capital, labour and management capacity needed to reproduce viable operations. Attempts to reduce machinery,

input and household costs are the first line of survival strategies used to maintain the farm unit. Many farm operators and family members are putting in longer work days both on and off the farm. In Canada, one-third of farm operators work off farm. In Saskatchewan, 35% of farm operators have off-farm jobs (Statistics Canada, 1992b).

Other strategies employed by farm operations to reduce costs and increase revenues have come through experimentation with different crop and livestock production techniques and products. Some farmers are experimenting with resource conservation practices such as no-till or organic farming to address economic instability and the long-term environmental effects of agriculture. Furthermore, some farmers are using innovative organizational approaches to cut costs and increase resource productivity. One example is joining with another farm family unit to share machinery and work land together. These reciprocal sharing arrangements may be legally formalized as full-fledged family corporations, cooperatives, partnerships, or they remain as informal agreements between neighbours, friends or family. Such innovations are not new to farmers. Mutual sharing and cooperation amongst farmers, farm families and rural

communities have been an integral part of rural life since Western settlement. As in pioneer times, some farmers cooperate with others in order to survive in a family-based farm enterprise, and to create community.

Recently renewed efforts to innovate and reorganize stems from a crisis in the reproduction of family farming and an ongoing commitment to this model of farm business (Buttel et al., 1990). Mass media, governments, farm organizations and farmers themselves have been telling the general public of the struggles faced by family farms. Stories about inflated costs and deflated prices, suicides and abuse, bankruptcies and buy-outs, are all signs of the times. Diversification efforts through changes in agro-industrial relations (e.g. joint ventures with large grain handling corporations and other farmers to gain more advantageous market access), changes to government programs (e.g. crop insurance and transport subsidies) and community and regional initiatives (e.g. rural development corporations) have all been touted as answers to problems confronting family farmers.

Not necessarily apparent when looking at such initiatives is a deeper question: can the family farm, as an institution, be "saved", and moreover, is it worth

saving? This thesis addresses these issues by exploring the inner workings of the dominant organizational form for agricultural commodity production, albeit an institution at the centre of an agrarian crisis--the family farm.

Reducing the study of farming to only its economic elements, without looking at the internal relations of production and reproduction, severely limits the analysis of the social economy of family farming and the dynamics of farm sector re-organization. Family farms share many similar social characteristics and this is captured in the commonly held view that the quintessential family farm unit consists of a married couple with the male as the head of the farming operation. He, the husband, owns the land and does the majority of the farm work. The farm wife, in turn, has primary responsibility for household activities. She bears and raises children, carries out domestic and garden chores, and helps her husband in the field and barn. The male offspring--or one of them at least--wait to take over the family operation when the time is right. Daughters help with household and field chores as needed.

Adopting this model of the family farm tends to submerge and deform issues of land tenure, resource management, gendered division of labour, and farm

organization. The stereotypical patriarchal farm unit as an accurate depiction, as a natural form of organization and as a legitimate embodiment of community values, is the starting point for most analysis of farm sector structure and restructuring. Government agencies, farm organizations, and agribusiness all subscribe to the above view of the family farmer as an independent, self-sufficient, entrepreneurial individual preserving the cherished values of harmonious, productive household, and small business. Moreover, this conventional view of family farming ignores the occurrence of multi-operator and multi-family farms. Farm units operated by several families are simply referred to as "family farms."

This type of mainstream analysis fails, for the most part, to acknowledge important dynamics that occur within these farm units. Media, agro-business and government agencies still address the farm as an uncomplicated unit in which only the "principal operator" or "farmer" is counted or acknowledged. Not until 1991 did the Census of Agriculture allow more than one operator per farm to be reported (Statistics Canada, 1992b).

Even with the change by Census Canada to acknowledge the possibility that more than one operator may be present,

contributions by others involved in the farm operation generally go unrecognized. For instance, family members that may not be counted as operators, but who nevertheless contribute to the daily operation of the farm, are largely invisible. In this fashion, the contribution of most women and children are ignored. Furthermore, individuals or families who operate a farm jointly, would have to be legally registered as a corporation, partnership or company to be acknowledged as something other than the stereotypical family farm. This use of the term family farm is misleading in that it disguises the real way that people participate in resource ownership, labour sharing and integration of economic, social and ecological objectives through the practice of farming.

Existing research by social scientists, for the most part, fails to adequately explore the complex internal dynamics of farm households and their farming operations. Such an exploration must consider domestic labour, work by unpaid family members, and off-farm work--categories in which women have significant roles. Social science research also tends to overlook alternative farming arrangements that involve occasional or long-term cooperation in

production, and again, the roles that women play in such arrangements.

This exploratory study compares the experiences of Saskatchewan women who live and work on multi-family farms with those of women who live and work on single-family farms.<sup>1</sup> The experiences of forty-five Saskatchewan farm women were studied using formal and informal in-person data collection methods. The study sample consisted of one sub-sample of fifteen women from individual-type operations and another sub-sample of thirty women from fifteen multi-family operations. These sub-samples arose out of a related study (hereafter referred to as the farm unit survey) which compared fifteen multi-family operations and fifteen individual type operations in terms of the social economy of resource conservation practices, the extent of social and economic relations with other farm families, and patterns of on- and off-farm work. In the farm unit survey, only the male principal operators were interviewed but by combining data from both studies it was possible to explore

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<sup>1</sup> "Multi-family" farms, "multi-operator" farms and "group" farms are terms used to refer to the sub-sample of farms in this study with three or more "principal operators", defined as individuals with equity in the farm unit, and an active role in management and farm work. "Single-operator" farms, "sole proprietorship" farms, "individual-type" farms and "match" farms refer to the matched sub-sample of study farms with at most two operators.

the situation of women and the dynamics of gender relations on these types of farms.

The primary goal of this study was to compare the roles and experiences of farm women within contemporary multi-family and single family farms. The principal research questions were as follows:

1. How do women on multi-family and single family farms compare with respect to participation in on-farm and off-farm work and, involvement in farm management?
2. How are women's labour, capital, land and livestock resources mobilized for use in farm operations? Do these resources change the farm and household organizational structure? For example, does property ownership by a farm women influence her role in decision making?
3. How do women from the two study samples compare with respect to participation in community and farm organizations and ties to other relatives and neighbours (kinship and community networks)?

This research project was designed to document the experiences of farm women associated with multi-family operations. For example, would women who are part of multi-family operations tend to be less active in decision-making

with respect to the farm operation than women from individual-type farms? The organizational character of certain multi-family farms may exclude some farm women from being active in the decision-making arena. In this connection, Gordon (1976) and Cooperstock (1968) found that women rarely have full membership status within cooperative farms even though by-laws may provide for open membership. Nevertheless, this study also investigates the possibility that because of their potential for innovative ownership and labour organization, multi-family farming, specifically cooperative farms, may help to transform the position of women in farming from one of invisible obscurity to full and equal participation.

The relative extent of women's participation in farming is not likely to be causally related to farm organization alone. Commodified external relations and the pervasive character of patriarchy<sup>2</sup> may prevent women, whether they come from traditional family operations or cooperative farms, from attaining equality in the context of primary agricultural production. These external market

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<sup>2</sup> Patriarchy is an ingrained set of values and practices that function as an instrument of social power and control. These values are designed to subordinate women while supporting male objectives that are taught as the status quo. These values and practices create a climate of unequal gender relations and roles that result in the exploitation and servitude of women within their societies, communities and homes (Friedmann, 1986b).

relations, along with benefits the family-based farm firm derives from the exploitation of women's labour and biological capacity to produce children, help to maintain and preserve the subordinate position of farm wives.

These issues will be investigated using a feminist perspective that considers the relations of capitalism and patriarchy, and how these two social conditions interact to render it difficult for farm women to gain equality with their male counterparts on family farms. These pervasive structures and cultures act as barriers not only to women who live and work on more conventional family farms but also to women who live and work in the context of less conventional farming arrangements such as machinery cooperatives and multi-family corporations.

The feminist perspective used centers on farm women giving meaning and understanding to their particular experiences and activities within their environment, cultural setting and productive realms. This provides us a different perspective apart from the dominant perspectives that pervade rural life (Sachs, 1996). We gain an "insider" insight into the realities of farm women by concentrating specifically on the reality of the experiences of farm women. The particular ways in which farm women come to view

their world is pivotal to understanding how gender inequities are created and sustained.

Although it is necessary to look at the structure of the farm household and the social relations formed within it, it will be argued that to understand the specific nature of farm women's contributions and experiences, a socially constructed reality must be examined which begins with her perception of the everyday existence of which she is part. Therefore, in this study, three aspects of a farm woman's reality will be explored: "female perspective/reality," a "male perspective/reality" and a "composite reality." Women's perspectives are researched via the formal and informal responses given by female respondents to the farm women survey. Another aspect of her reality, the "male perspective" reality is based on responses given by male operators interviewed for the analogous farm unit survey. The "composite reality" is drawn out through a process of triangulation, i.e. examining what he says in light of what she says, examining what she says in light of what he says, and adding contextual data from observation and the knowledge of rural culture which I am able to bring to bear. This composite reality, in one sense, is a constructed amalgam of responses and observations linked

together by the researcher in order to produce a fuller picture of a farm woman's participation in the farm household, enterprise and communities to which she belongs.

Understanding women's perceptions of what they contribute to the farm household and enterprise allows us to place values on contributions that would otherwise go unseen (Shortall, 1994; Whatmore, 1991). Labour and property ownership are not the only area where gender inequalities exist. Gender relations are played out in all domains of agrarian and social life. Whether a farm is organized as a single family farm unit or as a cooperative, the subordination of women may still occur. It is widely argued that gender divisions are created by two separate but related ideologies, patriarchy and capitalism. However, the underlying characteristics of gender inequalities are inherent in the meanings and ideas that are communicated between men and women and proliferated through the social networks we form (Shortall, 1992).

## **CHAPTER 2. AGRICULTURE, FARMING AND GENDER: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

There is a growing body of social science research that focuses on women in agriculture. This literature is linked to several related areas of scholarly activity. There are connections to the sociology of development and underdevelopment that has documented the various processes under which peasant agrarian economies have been incorporated into a world system of capitalist commodity exchange. There are also strong links to the critical feminist scholarship that has focused on gender as a central analytical category in the social relations of production, consumption and reproduction. The sociology of women in agriculture also emerges from, and has informed, a broader scholarship in the sociology of agriculture.

Over the last two decades the sociology of agriculture has developed a critical analysis of the political and social economy of agro-industrial sectors in the advanced capitalist states. Along with social class position, the gendered division of labour has figured significantly in the analysis of social relations surrounding agriculture and food.

In this chapter, attention is given to some key analytical contributions from the sociology of agriculture that provide a framework for studying the dynamics of gender relations in farm households and farm enterprises. Attention is directed to research on women in the social economy of family farming, and to related works that provide concepts for understanding gender relations in households and families. Because the present study compares single family farms with the less common multiple-family model, this literature review includes a discussion of research on the sociology of cooperative farms, group farming, intergenerational farms, and other variants of multi-family farming in the context of capitalist markets.

## **2.1 THE SOCIOLOGY OF AGRICULTURE**

The sociology of agriculture has institutional roots in the Land Grant University system of the United States, and specifically, in departments of rural sociology that are a part of most major state funded agricultural faculties in those universities. It has additional roots in some of the major agricultural universities and agricultural research institutes of Western and Eastern Europe. In Canada, rural sociology was never

institutionalized as a separate discipline. Rather, sociologists and political economists working in several disciplinary contexts have made important contributions. Innes (1956), for example, studied Canadian agriculture, and especially the wheat subsector, using the same "staples" framework that he had elaborated to trace the development of institutional arrangements around fur, fish, and other major commodities that figured centrally in the economic history of the nation. Fowke (1957) studied the development of the prairie wheat economy and the associated regulatory regime that went with a national program of western expansion and economic development.

The sociology of agriculture has undergone several major changes in the theoretical frameworks and areas of investigation. Many of these developments parallel debates and changes that have occurred in the larger discipline of sociology. In the 1970s, the return to classical works of Marx, Lenin, and Weber, among others, led to a re-opening of debates about the fate of petty commodity producers, i.e. family farmers, in industrialized and capitalist states (Buttel & Newby, 1980). While political economy focused on the differentiation of family farms into semi-proletarianized households, on the one hand, and highly

capitalized, labour-hiring units on the other, feminist scholars began to focus on the gender division of labour within the farm household, and on the patriarchal character of farming (Shaver, 1989). This research is discussed in the section immediately below.

The sociology of agriculture is important as a subdiscipline of sociology for a number of reasons. Rural smallholders, i.e. peasant producers, are still the numerical majority in most Third world countries. The literature of the sociology of agriculture, and the associated work of sociologists, anthropologists, and economists in the field of peasant studies, is central to the analysis of development and underdevelopment in rural economies at all stages of incorporation into the capitalist world system of commodity relations.

The sociology of agriculture has also made important contributions to sociology in areas of agricultural labour studies (see for example, Thomas, 1985; Friedland et al., 1981). The sociology of agriculture is also an important arena for debates about the informalization of labour, about pluriactive livelihood strategies, and about the combination of non-capitalist forms of work organization

with the most advanced forms of transnational capitalist enterprises (Mann, 1990).

The question of the persistence or disappearance of family farms is important to this thesis because part of this debate hinges on the character of household relations within the farm enterprise. Family farming can be conceptualized as petty commodity production in that the farm and household unit unites ownership, management, and labour functions under one roof (Bernstein et al., 1992). For this reason, the term simple commodity production is sometimes preferred (Friedmann, 1980; 1981). The close intermingling of the household with the economic life of the farm enterprise is acknowledged in the use, more or less interchangeably, of these and other labels: domestic commodity production and household-based commodity production. No matter what label is preferred, the crux of the matter is that the household and farm enterprise together subsume the negotiations and tensions surrounding the social relations of production, the social relations of consumption, and the social relations of firm and family reproduction.

Explanations for the persistence of family-based forms of economic organization in agriculture tend to hinge on

several related dynamics (Mann, 1990 ; Mooney, 1988). One theoretical approach focuses on obstacles to direct capitalist entry into farming, especially the non-identity of production time and labour time which makes it difficult to profitably employ a full-time paid labour force in many types of agricultural production (Mann and Dickinson, 1987).

Industrial capitalist firms have generally preferred to exert control over farm production via contractual integration rather than more direct forms of vertical integration, i.e. corporate farms. Moreover, agribusiness firms have developed profitable markets selling inputs and services to farmers, and, in the process, have displaced operations and value-adding activities that formerly belonged to the farm sector, e.g. selection and saving of seeds, raising draft animals, provisioning the farm household with homegrown foods. This process has been described as "appropriation" (Goodman and Redclift, 1991). Capitalist firms, the argument runs, have encountered roadblocks that have discouraged direct entry into farm commodity production--except in unique circumstances. Moreover, they prefer to leave the risky business of raising primary commodities to farmers, and to invest

capital in related activities, such as processing or input manufacture, where it can be expected to yield more reliable and higher returns.

On the other side of this equation, some theorists have directed attention to the flexibility and competitive durability of the family farm enterprise (Mooney, 1988; Flora and Flora, 1988; Freidmann, 1986b). Building on A.V. Chayanov (1966) and Max Weber (1972), they focus on the willingness of the family farmer and the ability of the family farm to persevere without more than a break-even rate of return. Exploiting themselves and family labour, farm operators can weather long stretches of ruinously low commodity prices. Other strategies include diverting family labour to off-farm employment, cutting back on consumption, and living off equity, i.e. depreciating assets such as buildings and equipment.

According to this theoretical argument, the family farm is a formidable low cost competitor which, for economic and social reasons, tends to outbid corporate interests for the necessary land base. From the point of view of analysis of gender relations, this is a pivotal point in that women form the core of the unpaid labour force in the household, farmyard, and field (Sachs, 1983;

Fink, 1992). Women also manage the conflicting demands of household consumption and investment in productive assets, and women do much of the emotional labour involved in disciplining and conditioning children to work in the family enterprise (Kohl, 1976).

Whatmore (1988) has added to the above discussion, calling for a feminist framework to provide a meaningful analysis of the agrarian political economy of agriculture. Such a framework would view patriarchal gender relations as socially constructed through active interpretative processes of human agency. Farm women and men make sense of their life-worlds as they influence their own experiences and are themselves influenced by wider structural relations which act to subordinate women to men. Such a framework would also recognize that the reproduction of the family farm is intimately connected to production and varies by historical and class conditions. Finally, the approach would recognize the family as an "ideologically-loaded" composite of kinship and household relations which is historically and culturally varied but based on the ideal of the monogamous, heterosexual farm couple (Whatmore, 1990).

Women's experience in farming is developed further in studies which look specifically at the culture of agriculture, focusing on the family farm as its core social institution. Political economy theories, outlined above, tend to focus on the family farm household as a homogeneous unit, neglecting the diversity and heterogeneity of farming households and the communities of which they are a part. Focusing on the specific cultural context of family-based farms, we can observe the differences between social and economic realities, and the historically entrenched myths that are shaped both by capitalist regimes and familial ideologies.

On one hand, culturally based family traditions provide a framework in which farms are socially and economically organized and reproduced. This involves patterns of land tenure, intergenerational transfer, and divisions of labour. On the other hand, the reproduction of the family farm is shaped by external linkages to more powerful merchant, industrial and financial capitals which promote competitiveness and individualistic survival strategies (Tauxe, 1992). When these two dynamics are joined the result is a contrived myth. The myth is contradicted by much empirical evidence but is nurtured by

interests both outside and inside the farm household. This process is described by Tauxe (1992: 315) who examines the culture of the family farm and suggests that:

as petty capitalists, they have been subject to the laws of motion of capitalist society, that have made their's a competitive way of life that is destructive of their families. Nonetheless, the dialectic between the ideals and the practical experiences of farming has produced ideological acquiescence to the system that has caused them so much suffering.

This observation is supported and developed further in other research on the cultural dynamics that occur within farm family operations and communities. The significance of culture as a factor shaping the structure of agriculture and the reproductive strategies of family farmers is documented by Salamon (1984) who looked at ethnicity as a factor in local land ownership patterns. She found that where farm communities may have looked superficially similar in a given region, there were significant differences in ownership patterns which were related to ethnic origin. Land ownership and intergenerational transfer patterns differed markedly between study groups of Yankee American, German and Irish descended farm families in East Central Illinois.

Salamon suggests that ethnic origin is not the only factor that influences the local structure of agriculture,

but can help to explain certain anomalies that economic models cannot. For example, Germans tend to pass their land on through familial lines as opposed to Yankees, who have no particular commitment to such intergenerational transfers. This is reflected in patterns of land fragmentation, local control of land, and the dynamics of local land markets.

In addition to ethnicity, Salamon (1993) adds other dynamics underlying gender inequalities to her discussion of land and farm management patterns. She found that beliefs held by families of German origin, who make up the largest percentage of farm households in Midwestern United States, help to perpetuate the subordinate position of women. The key ideology is a belief in the sacred trust of a family line as a means to achieving continuity of ownership of farms through father-son succession of land tenure. This belief adds both to the persistence of the "ideal" family farm and, not coincidentally, to the continuity of gender inequality.

In general, the culture of North American agriculture has been deeply rooted in the ideology of the family farm "models" which has been both embraced and constructed by the culturally and ethnically diverse groups which founded

this industry amidst the rise of capitalist-based relations of production and reproduction. The contemporary agrarian crisis, however, is forcing a reconsideration of the family farm in order to preserve the attractive dimensions of family farming as a means of earning a living and achieving a quality of life (Buttel, 1983; Swanson, 1990).

## **2.2 Women in Farming**

Prior to the 1970s, there were few studies of women and agriculture in Canada or the United States. Early research, dating back to the 1950s, was largely limited to a description of traditional roles held by women and men. These studies acknowledged that women's presence on farms contributed to the overall functioning of farm operations. However, they did not specifically explain the dynamics involved in the woman's relationship to the farm production unit and household. For example, Abell (1954) studied a sample of 202 farms in Central Alberta. She documented women's various labour contributions and the effect these had on the farm enterprise. Her findings stated that labour efficiency and volume of farm production generally increased when a farm wife was present. A structural functionalist approach to analysis used by Abell and others

(e.g. Straus, 1960; Wilkening & Morrison, 1963) was typical of that time period.

In the early and mid 1970s, as in other area of social life, the women's movement influenced social research and contributed to the documentation of the conditions and significance of women's work (Shaver, 1989). A few researchers began to identify and quantify the work roles of farm women. For example, Sawyer (1973) studied sixty-seven married couples living on farms in the Lower Fraser Valley of British Columbia. She looked at factors that effected the wife's involvement in farm management decisions. Her findings suggested variables such as family size, farm size and income, could restrict or encourage the wife's participation in farm decisions. Studies, such as the above, were the first to look directly at the roles of farm women in relation to the farms with which they were associated.

In the later 1970s and early 1980s, the literature on women and agriculture expanded. Policy makers, activists and farm women's organizations began piloting a number of large scale descriptive studies (Shaver, 1989). For example, the Saskatchewan Department of Labour (1977), the Canadian Council on Rural Development (1979), and the

National Farmer's Union (1981) all discussed the work-load women carried on farms. They pointed out the legal and economic inequalities between women and men in rural Canada, and argued for recognition of the significant labour contributions made by farm women. In the 1980s, scholarly studies on women and agriculture expanded in a number of different directions. Gaps in official census data regarding women's labour and financial contributions; work done by farm and women's organizations; the crisis within the agricultural sector itself; and, the rise of women in academic positions, were all factors in the surge of studies done in Canada and the United States (Shaver, 1989).

On-going themes in the literature include: descriptive studies documenting on-farm and off-farm work by farm women; research on decision making processes within the farm and household; comprehensive theoretical approaches attempting to understand how institutions of capitalism and patriarchy interact to shape the involvement of farm women and men, and; the social realities of farm women (Shaver, 1989).

Descriptive studies in the 1980s and 1990s, have focused on re-conceptualizing the term "work" to include

all the different and varied things that farm women did in a day. Researchers realized that a broader definition of farm work was needed to give a truer representation of the economy of agricultural production. For example, Smith (1987) adopted a threefold model. Women's farm work included support, service and management activities in addition to field and barn work. Household work was classified as indirect support, and off-farm work was re-conceptualized as direct assistance. Using this model, Smith's studies of farm women in Saskatchewan documented a substantial increase in labour contribution that was not recognized under the older analytical models (Shaver, 1989).

Added to this re-conceptualization of work were studies by Coughenour and Swanson (1983), Dion and Welsh (1992), Reimer (1986), and Buttel and Gillespie (1984) who explored the interrelationship of women and men's on-farm, household, and off-farm roles. This research demonstrated the involvement of women in both on- and off- farm work.

In 1983, Sachs carried out an extensive empirical study in the United States that documented the consistent underestimation and undervaluation of farm women's contributions. Sachs linked the persistence of the family

farm, the social dynamics of the nuclear family, and the exploited roles of farm women, with the larger context of development of capitalist economy. She argued that farms continued to be characterized by a sexual division of labour in part because of the need to have flexibility to cope with the exigencies brought on by the socio-economic structures of capitalism. Sachs was one of the first students of gender relations in agriculture to link descriptive research to a theoretical framework of patriarchy and capitalist development (Buttel et al., 1990).

Since Sach's empirical study, many articles have appeared examining the situations of women within the global context of agricultural policies and the agro-food industry. As noted in the previous section, Whatmore (1991), Friedmann (1986a) and Mann (1990) have used comprehensive historical social-economic frameworks to investigate how institutions of capitalism and patriarchy interacted to shape the involvement of women and men in various work, household and family roles.

Another example, of the framework outlined above, is Gasson's work which reviewed the dimensions of family farming in the United Kingdom using a multi-disciplinary

approach. Drawing on insights from industrial economics, social anthropology, history and rural sociology, Gasson et al. (1988) linked farm size, kinship, marriage and intergenerational transfer to the viability of farm businesses. These factors operated in dynamic interaction with outside pressures of economic and financial uncertainty. Gasson et al. argued that the flexibility of farm household labour allocation given gendered roles and power relations contributed to the viability of farms under study.

Many studies have focused on decision making within the farm unit/farm household complex. Factors such as farm size, property ownership, participation in on- and off-farm work, and issues of domestic violence and stress have all been discussed in relation to control over decisions within the farm household/enterprise. Research on decision-making has found that male operators, those who own and control the majority of productive resources, are also primarily responsible for significant decisions with respect to the farm operation.

Wilkening (1981) was among the first to identify farm size as a significant factor in both decision-making, and the interplay of farm production and farm household. This

data from the United States data suggest that women are less involved in the decision making process on larger farms. Hired labour replaces family labour. Decisions regarding the farm enterprise are removed from the household. And, since property rights, on larger farms, still remain largely in male principal operator's hands, farm wives' roles in decision making become more marginalized. Studies by Lobao and Meyer (1991), Gasson (1980), Flora & Flora, 1988) suggest that women generally have a more limited role in decision-making on larger farms.

Hedley (1981a) found that intergenerational transfer of land on the Canadian prairies followed a deeply entrenched patriarchal tradition. Hutson (1985) discussed two predominant types of patriarchal transfers on family farms; integration of the son(s) into the current farm; and creation of new farms with the son(s) as principal operator. Like Hedley, Hutson (1985) found that intergenerational transfer to women was uncommon, and usually only took place through a death or a "back door" e.g. situations such as divorce or lack of male heirs.

Farm stress is another important area of investigation linked to the literature on farm households and women in

agriculture. Researchers such as Keating (1987: 1987a) and Kubic and Knuttila (1994) state that while it is important to understand the structural and economic factors that contribute to tension in farm households, the consequences of personal stress felt by men, women and children should not be left unexamined.

As farming has changed so perhaps has people's ability to cope with these changes. At the time of settlement, farm communities were frequently able to deal collectively with economic and social problems (Hedley, 1981a). As farming has become more individualistic and more business oriented, there is less likelihood of collective action to deal with the causes or consequences of stress. Stress becomes a personalized, family issue. Farmers often blame themselves for not being able to cope with the financial pressures (Keating, 1987). The current farm crises and the stresses related to this, increases the incidence of suicides, domestic abuse and general violence in rural communities. Women must try to maintain a viable farm by balancing household, farm, and off-farm labour demands. They must also deal with partners who may not be coping well with the pressures they are under (Keating, 1987).

Farm women are responsible for the majority of domestic and household work in addition to a share of farm chores, and full or part-time off-farm work. This situation contributes to anxiety and depression and may lead to a sense of having little control over what is going on in their lives. The options available to these women include talking to neighbours and family, or seeking out counseling. However, these choices generally do not take into account the social, economic and political processes and structures that produce the stress. The responsibility for coping, adapting, and responding is placed back on the individual (Kubic and Knuttila, 1994).

Most of the literature discussed above has used a household level of analysis. This analysis has revealed that women are working without commensurate pay or recognition, and key decisions remains largely out of their control. Shortall (1992) studied the social construction of gender relations through an analysis of power relationships and structures. In her study of twenty Irish wives, Shortall (1992) paid attention to work contributions, to relationships women formed on and off the farm, and how this did or did not translate into power and status. She found that farm women attempt to involve themselves outside

the farm to gain the power and status they do not have within the farm household. The sense of personal worth and identity farm women derive from off-farm work and community related activities is overshadowed, however, by the societal attention that is bestowed primarily on the male operators within the family farm unit.

Shortall (1992) discusses how further exclusion of farm women occurs through farm information that is addressed exclusively to male operators, media treatment of gender roles in farm households, and agriculture officials and agro-related businesses that fail to acknowledge the contributions of farm wives. Moreover, women are viewed as being dependents of the farm unit, their various contributions go unrecognized and they are categorized as financial dependents despite their material and financial input. Labour performed for the farm unit is exploitative in that it sustains and enlarges the status held by their husbands at the expense of any progress the women make to create their own identity apart from the farm household. Farm women are confronted with institutional exclusion and find themselves relegated to a position of dependency by an ideology that perpetuates the dominance of the male at the expense of her own identity.

Power/status relationships formed along gender lines are socially constructed to perpetuate the "myth" of the family farm, and to sustain the on-going relations of capitalism and patriarchy (Shortall, 1992). Shortall suggests that because farm women are working within the parameters of a capitalist patriarchal system, they are confined to marginalized status within the framework of the farm family household. Researchers such as Shortall (1992), Whatmore (1994) and Tauxe (1992) are part of a new wave of scholars studying women and agriculture who have begun to link the lived realities of farm women to the cultural, political, social and economic dimensions within which these experiences are socially constructed.

### **2.3 Multi-family Farms**

With the exception of the cooperative and collective farms of the socialist states, and a considerable literature on the kibbutz and moshav farms of Israel, there has been relatively little research on the character of cooperative or multi-family farming arrangements. The complexity of the relationships within these types of farm organizations inhibits easy categorization and quantification. Nevertheless, some researchers have sought

to document and describe group farms, and to evaluate these arrangements as possible alternatives to traditional family farms.

Researchers who have studied group farming arrangements cite a number of possible advantages for these organizational innovations (Elmgren and Brown, 1978; Morris, 1972; Melynk, 1989; 1995). These include reduced machinery costs, greater capacity to diversify, possibilities for specialization of labour, sharing of a greater pool of knowledge and skills, better farm records, superiority of formalized group decision-making, greater access to credit, more free time, and, security in case of illness or accident. In addition to addressing cost and management problems, group farming arrangements may also be useful in responding to other inadequacies: the unmet needs of part-time farmers, farm women and hired workers. Under some conditions, group farming arrangements might also facilitate adopting resource-conserving production practices and provide a socio-economic base on which to rebuild rural communities (Gordon, 1976; Gertler and Murphy, 1987; Buttel and Gertler, 1981; Morris, 1972; Elmgren and Brown, 1978).

Hedley (1980), Bennett (1975), and Freidmann (1980) have identified mutual aid, machinery sharing, and group farming as among the survival strategies adopted by family farmers. While many of these cooperative strategies have been present in some measure for decades, there may now be a growing awareness that such innovations might be necessary for the survival of family-based farming.

In a comparative study of fifteen group farms and fifteen matched individual operator farms in Saskatchewan, Gertler (1981) found that group farms could save one-third in machinery investment per acre despite having larger equipment than neighbouring family-type operations.<sup>3</sup> In comparison to other farms in the region, there were more livestock per unit area on the farm operated by groups. In comparison to the match sample, they made slightly greater use of new techniques and personal safety equipment. Production practices on the two sets of farms were similar, reflecting shared culture as well as the general economic environment of these farmers (Gertler, 1981).

Cooperstock (1968) studied eleven group farms in Saskatchewan. He noted that while farmers (farm households)

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<sup>3</sup> Many of the operations included in the present study were part of the original sample used by Gertler (1981). See Chapter 3 for a further discussion of this overlap.

worked together in order to do things more economically, the focal point of such arrangements was the individual family households. The structure of the farm household was similar to that found in individual family farms although farm production was based on pooled labour and land. Children were still socialized within the context of the separate households and socialized through the same community ties as traditional single family farms. This is in marked contrast to the Hutterites who have a bounded community setting which provides its own social, cultural and, to a large degree, economic ties. Cultural influences on group farms are not dissimilar from those experienced by the individual-type farms who they are their neighbours. Cooperstock (1968) argued that the absence of boundaries between the cooperative farms and their surrounding communities provided cultural re-enforcement to the individualistic values of family farms and inhibited the development of a distinctive cooperative culture. As illustrated by the Hutterite experiences, boundaries of some kind appear to be a requirement for maintaining a pattern that is significantly different from the prevailing culture (Melynk, 1985).

Research on multi-family operations has overlooked, for the most part, the role of women on group farms. Whatmore (1988) noted that while there have been several relevant studies in Europe, Latin America and Asia, where group farming is more common, there has been few studies done in North America.

Friedmann (1986), Buttel et al. (1990) and Hedley (1988) recognize the need to examine farm organization and its potential influence on the farm operation, farm household, and individual participants. Zaleski (1982) reported briefly on the experiences of women on cooperative farms in Saskatchewan, and suggests that where women have not obtained full membership, they were not actively involved in decision-making. She speculates that if women did obtain full membership, they might achieve a new relationship to farming, an equal vote, and full remunerated participation. However, external relations impinging on the farm and household could prevent this from happening (Zaleski, 1982).

There is reason to believe that this updated form of family farming may help to overcome some of the difficulties facing rural communities, and moreover, may allow some women to attain an equal status in farming. On

the other hand, there are clearly barriers to the implementation of multi-family models of farm organizations, and barriers to the full emancipation of women within such organizations. It is evident that there is still need for more research in this area if multi-family arrangements are to be evaluated as an alternative form of family farm organization.

#### **2.4 Towards a New Synthesis**

An understanding of the current literature on women and agriculture is important to this thesis. There is a wide and varied theoretical and empirically informed discourse on the position of farm women within the structural relations of agricultural production and the social reproduction of family farming.

The structural relations of capitalism and patriarchy have created the material base (land/property), the practices (e.g. decision-making,) and the cultural ideology for the division of labour and the specific gendered realities of men and women involved in farming. The ideology is socially constructed through individual experiences, and in rural community relations and practices. As Sachs (1996: 123) states,

a decade of scholarship devoted to measuring women's work in agriculture has resulted in serious attempts to reconceptualize and understand women's work on farms and has led to the realization that merely documenting the extent of women's work fails to destabilize patriarchal authority.

As discussed by Shortall (1992; 1994), Whatmore (1991) and Tauxe (1992), agrarian ideologies reflect the continuing dominance of patriarchal authority and patriarchal structures. These ideologies serve to conceal and obfuscate the oppression and exploitation experienced by women. This thesis adopts a feminist theoretical perspective which take the women's standpoint as central to analysis and to action needed to transcend and transform the position of women, from subordination to

In this thesis, farm women are brought into the foreground so that we can gain insight into their perceptions and their experiences in rural agrarian society. Added to this are two important dimensions. First, the social organization of the farm unit is highlighted through a comparative framework which documents potential differences between women who come from multi-family farms and those associated with single family farms. Second, connection to a parallel study, in which the male operators were interviewed, adds an important dimension to understanding the social construction of gender relations

at the household and individual levels. This analysis hinges on an subtle but often overlooked aspect of family farming and farm households: the terms have never adequately explained the experiences of women and men who come together to farm as a family unit.

## CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 A Comparative Research Framework

This study is linked to a larger project that analyzed a fifteen multi-family(group) farm operations and fifteen single family(individual-type or matched) farm operations at two points in time: 1979-80 and 1990-91 (Gertler, 1981; Gertler & Murphy, 1987; Gertler & Swystun, 1992). The 1979-80 study compared the performance of group and individual-type farms in terms of resource management practices. The 1990-91 follow-up broadened the scope of inquiry to include more social and economic variables. Greater attention was paid to the social economy of resource conservation practices, the extent of social and economic relations with other farm families, and patterns of off-farm work. Specific strategies adopted by the group and individual-type farm operations in response to financial stress were also explored. The umbrella project, herein designated the "farm unit survey," was conducted by Gertler using structured interview schedules.<sup>4</sup> The respondents in that

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<sup>4</sup> Gertler conducted the primary field research in both stages of the umbrella study. The initial phase was research for an Msc. Thesis; "A Comparison of Agricultural Resource Management on Selected Group and Individual Farms in Saskatchewan," McGill University, Montreal (1981). Financial support for fieldwork conducted in 1979-80 was received from the McConnell Memorial Foundation and the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, McGill,

study were the "principal operators", all of whom were male. The methodology used in the present study, herein designated the "farm women survey," was developed in relation to the broader farm unit survey of 1990, and was, in part, influenced by the parameters and protocols of that study.

The structured interview schedule used in the farm women study was designed to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. Two versions of this questionnaire were prepared: one for interviewing women from conventional family-type operations and one for interviewing women associated with multi-family operations. In the latter case, questions were included that were relevant only to this type of operation, e.g. the social dynamics involved in working with more than one family.<sup>5</sup>

Quantitative measures yielded a set of descriptive statistics which allowed comparisons with data collected in the farm unit survey, as well as with other research studies and statistical sources. The qualitative components, obtained through open-ended questions, and

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University. Financial support for the second round of field work, which included data collection for this thesis, came from the Centre for the Study of Cooperatives, the College of Arts and Science, and the University Humanities and Social Science Research Fund, University of Saskatchewan.

<sup>5</sup> The questionnaires are reproduced in Appendix A

through more informal conversation, facilitated fuller exploration of the understandings, emotions and actions of these farm women, explained from their own points of view and in their own words. Informal discussions, before, after and during breaks in the formal interview process promoted greater openness and information sharing, and provided examples, details, and contextualizing commentary useful in documenting the social construction of the farm women's realities.

The study design made allowances for potential discrepancies between male and female responses, and between women's responses to formal questions and their responses in follow-up conversations, or in questions designed to seek clarification. The possibility of discrepancies between responses given by the two women surveyed on each group operation was also anticipated. It was expected, for example, that mothers and daughters-in-law might have quite different perceptions of the family dynamics.

The likelihood of this kind of divergent viewpoint was one of the reasons for doing interviews with more than one person on each farm. Divergent and sometimes contradictory responses were received on issues such as the importance of

off-farm work, contributions of resources, and character of membership in the farm operation. These contradictions served to highlight subtle as well as gross differences between the female perspective/reality, male perspective/reality, and a composite reality reflecting the complex interplay of different perspectives and interpretations--including those of the researcher.

To investigate the social construction of farm womens' realities, three aspects of this reality were explored: "female perspective/reality", "male perspective/reality" and a "composite reality". The farm woman's perspective/reality was documented through formal and informal responses to the farm women survey, i.e. responses given to questions on her contributions of labour, land, livestock, finances; on her roles in decision making (management); and, on her relations with family, community and farm business. Another aspect of her reality, here labelled "male perspective" reality, was measured by answers given by male respondents to the farm unit survey questions which asked about the same variables, i.e. capital contributions, labour, decision making, and relations to the family, community and business.

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, this composite reality is produced through "triangulation", i.e. examining what he says in light of what she says, examining what she says in light of what he says, and adding contextual data from observation and the knowledge of rural culture which the researcher is able to bring to bear. This "composite reality" is therefore an amalgam, a construction of the researcher to produce a "fuller" picture of a farm woman's involvement in the farm household, farm enterprise and community.

### **3.2 Sample Selection**

Data for both the farm women survey and farm unit survey were collected in 1990-91. Of the fifteen group farms sampled, eight were organized as machinery cooperatives, three as cooperative farms, two as corporate farms and two as partnerships. The fifteen matched farms included two corporations, one partnership and 12 unincorporated individual or family holdings.

Most of the sample farms were initially identified in 1979, during the first phase of the larger farm unit survey. At that time assistance was received from regional extension agrologists working for the Saskatchewan

Department of Agriculture and from personnel of the provincial Department of Cooperatives and Cooperative Development.<sup>6</sup> For the 1990-91 re-study, four of the original group farms were replaced because of retirement, reorganization, or other changes in status. Likewise, seven of the original matched farms had to be replaced because of a change in the status, or because of the replacement of the group farm with which they had been paired.

The primary criterion for inclusion in the study sample as a group farm was the involvement of three or more "principal operators", defined as individuals with equity in the farm unit, and an active role both in management and farm work. The number of owner-operators actively involved on the group farms studied in 1990-91, ranged from three to eleven, with a median of four. The criterion of three or more operators was employed in order to distinguish group farms from "individual-type" farms with one or two operators. The 1979 group farm sample included most of the larger machinery cooperatives and cooperative farms in the province, as well as two farm corporations which in day-to-day operations closely resembled these cooperatives. A

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<sup>6</sup> This latter Department was abolished shortly after the Progressive Conservative Party came to power in 1982. Some of its functions were retained in other departments.

similar claim could be made for the overlapping 1990-91 group farm sample, which included cooperative operations, incorporated farms, and partnerships.

For inclusion in the matched sample, an individual-type farm could have no more than two principal operators. To be eligible as a "match", a farm had to be well-established (i.e. in existence for a time comparable to the group farm with which they were paired), well-managed according to generally accepted criteria, and have land resources similar in quality, characteristics, and location to the particular group operation with which they were to be paired. An effort was made to identify matched farms with a comparable mix of livestock and crop enterprises. In 1990-91, ten of the matched farms had one principal operator, four were father-son arrangements, and one was classified (for purposes of this study) as having two principal operators because both the wife and husband owned land, and participated fully in management decisions and day-to-day operations.

The primary eligibility criterion for inclusion of a particular woman in the farm women study sample was that she lived on the study farm, or was involved in some aspect of the farm operation, e.g. did on-farm field work. The

woman had to have been involved in the operation for at least one year. On the group farms, two women were interviewed. One woman was interviewed from each of the single operator farms. In all but one case, the respondents were spouses of principal operators. The singular case involved a mother whose son was the principal operator. In all, forty-five interviews were conducted for the present study: thirty with women on the group farms and fifteen with women on the "individual-type" farms.

Given the questionnaire length and limits of time and expense in field research, it was necessary to limit the number of women interviewed to two on each of the group farms. Where possible, an attempt was made to interview women from two generations. This was done to determine if age or generational position was a factor with respect to involvement in the farm enterprise. For example, compared to younger women from the same operation, did older women have more or less involvement in decision-making?

### **3.3 Data Collection**

A structured survey questionnaire was used in face-to-face interviews. The interviews were conducted in the fall

and winter of 1990-91.<sup>7</sup> The data that was sought pertained primarily to the 1989 season. The interviewers travelled to the sample farms, which were located in various parts of central and southern Saskatchewan. The interviews were conducted in the homes of the respondents.

Interviews typically took between one and two hours, depending on the respondents' experience, knowledge, and willingness to share detailed information. The survey instrument consisted of both open and close-ended questions. As mentioned above, additional valuable information was collected in informal, pre- and post-interview discussions.

The farm unit and farm women surveys were conducted at the same time, reducing the cost and time needed to cover the sample area. Two or three researchers visited each site together. The interview team generally consisted of a male and one or two females. Typically, interviews were carried out simultaneously, in separate rooms, or in different homes. This helped to insure a greater measure of privacy for the women respondents. This division of labour allowed the male to interview "the farmer" in order to complete the

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<sup>7</sup> Lenore Swystun, conducted the majority of the forty-five surveys used in this study. On some of the farms an additional interviewer, either JoAnn Jaffe or Lori Dean, was involved.

farm unit survey. The farm woman (or women) were interviewed by the female researcher (or researchers). Being part of a "research team" allowed for comparison and corroboration of results, which was helpful where there were gaps. It also highlighted discrepancies. This research strategy played a significant role in subsequent interpretation and analysis of the contributions of farm women.

### **3.4 Measures**

A number of measures were used to collect information on common aspects of farm women's lives. Some of the same measures were used in the farm unit survey. This arrangement facilitated comparison of responses. The farm woman survey questionnaire was divided into six sections:<sup>8</sup>

- Personal History and Experience
- Home and Farm Life
- Work On and Off-farm
- Resource Mobilization
- Living in the Rural Community
- Farming in Saskatchewan.

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<sup>8</sup> See Appendix A for a copies of the interview schedules used.

The section on "Personal History and Experience" was designed to gather demographic data about the respondent and her background. The variables included, where she grew up (rural/urban), age, education, religion, ethnicity, and the number and ages of children (present or absent from operation). She was also asked about the history of her connection to the operation, and specifically the number of generations, on both her and her spouse's side, who had been involved in the farm operation. This section also asked about the circumstances under which she became involved in the farm enterprise.

A key part of this first section dealt with information related to her status/participation within the farm enterprise. The question of her "membership" was raised in this survey and in the farm unit survey. Some conflicting data resulted when the results were compared. As discussed above, the discrepancies in answers given by the women in this survey and, the men interviewed for the farm unit survey, were not unexpected.

In the "Home and Farm Life" section, the first set of questions focused on children's responsibilities and chores. This was important to compare family involvement across farm operation type, i.e. group farms versus

individual operator farms. This was followed by questions that quantified and examined the women's role in decision making with respect to home or household, community life, farm and non-farm organizations, farming practices, land and machinery purchases, farm finances, and, long-term planning for the farm, herself and her family. This was an attempt to measure the impact of farm type on women's involvements in management/decision making processes within the farm operation and farm household.

In a separate subsection, there were a number of measures dealing only with multi-family farms. A list of possible advantages and disadvantages was presented. After identifying those who applied to their own situation and experience, the women were asked to rank them. This list was also included in the farm unit survey, which allowed for comparisons to be drawn between the responses provided by male principal operators, and those provided by the sample of women surveyed.

The farm women survey included specific questions pertaining to her perceptions on being a part of a group farming operation. Considering the democratic philosophy underlying cooperatives, a key research question was whether or not group farms afforded women the opportunity

to become more fully involved and to gain recognition as full participating members. Did their experiences differ from other farm women, and if so, what accounted for that difference? What advantages and challenges did they face as part of a group operation, and what were the benefits and drawbacks of having other women involved?

In the sections, "Work On and Off-Farm" and "Resource Mobilization", the questionnaire explored women's household, farm, and off-farm labour contributions, as well as her contributions of land, livestock, machinery, capital, living expenses, or loans. In the farm unit survey, questions about on- and off-farm work, and the provision of capital used in the operation, were asked of the male principal operator. This allowed for a fuller understanding of the overall labour and capital contributions made to the operation by various household members.

There were also questions which asked the women about the relationship of their labour/capital contributions to the farm operation. Did women identify their work as contributing to the farm? Did they contribute resources to the farm? The women's answers given to these and related questions were particularly interesting, because their

responses often differed from those given in informal conversation--and from those given by male principal operators in the farm unit survey.

For example, when asked on the questionnaire if she did farm work, one woman answered with a flat "no". In informal discussions afterwards, however, she talked of driving the grain truck and helping to fix fences. When asked if this was farm work she said, "not really, it's not like operating a real piece of equipment like a tractor or swather, it's just something you do."

Questions on "Living in the Rural Community" were designed to elicit information on women's social networks and social activities. Questions were asked to gauge the amount of interaction women had with others in and around their communities. Additional questions focused on perceptions of life in the rural community. Questions on community organizations and recreational involvements also helped to reveal the social realities of women in the two sub-samples.

Documentation of the character and extent of networks women had within their communities was another goal of the research. The questionnaire section which focused on community and family networks, however, did not yield large

amounts of quantifiable data. When asked questions such as, "who do you turn to for friendship and support," few respondents provided detailed answers.

This inability to elicit detail was a shortcoming that may relate to the design of these questions, to the interview process, or to the state of mind of many of the respondents. The questionnaire was designed with some redundancies so other questions were able to compensate, in part. For example, questions such as, "do you have someone whom you consider a best friend in the local area/community", and "what sort of things would people in this community do for each other without expecting pay," provided some insight into the relationships of women both in and beyond the local community. This still left gaps in measuring her involvement in family and community networks. Informal conversations that took place after the formal survey verified this. Generally during these conversations that more details were revealed about the types and amounts of involvement the women had with others.

The final section, "Farming in Saskatchewan," solicited opinions on the position of women in agriculture and, agricultural topics in general, e.g. "What do you think are the most important problems facing farm families

these days?" This was done to provide an overview of the future needs and concerns of farm women. It also added to an understanding of their experiences.

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

Some of the quantifiable data from interview schedules was coded and entered into a statistical analysis program.<sup>9</sup> Univariate descriptive statistics and cross tabulations were generated. Variables for both sample groups were compared to reveal differences and commonalities.

Research in exploratory stages is often done by using a "mixed study" approach where both qualitative and quantitative methods are employed (Epstein and Stewart, 1991). This type of approach has been advocated by many feminist researchers because it ensures that when quantitative methods are weak, qualitative responses can be used to supplement and add richness to the data, and vice versa. By this route it has been possible to develop a more complex composite picture of farm women's "realities".

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<sup>9</sup>Version 4.1 of Number Cruncher Statistical Package was used.

### **3.6 Strengths and Limitations of the Research Methodology**

Participation in a larger research project made a "team approach" possible. This benefited the research process by allowing shared labour that reduced costs in time, energy and money. Savings were possible with respect to sample selection, contacting respondents, scheduling interviews and travel to the study sites. Having more than one interviewer available allowed for a shorter, more intensive "field campaign." This was important given constraints of funds for the field work, and given the need not to take too much of the respondent household's limited time. Team work or collaboration also helps to protect against single researcher bias, and provides more opportunities for researchers to discuss and compare findings and interpretations of data. It also meant that researchers did not have to go into the field alone, but rather always had another member of the research team available for debriefing or trouble-shooting.

The farm unit study provided additional information on the roles of both the women and men on the sample farms. The farm unit survey provided background on the establishment of the enterprise; the size and scale of operation; the legal and financial structure of the

enterprise; strategies in decision making; use of on- and off-farm labour; and, relations to the community.

A key factor affecting the efficiency of the research process was the backgrounds of the researchers themselves. Two of the female researchers (myself and Lori Dean) were raised on farms in Saskatchewan which brought an insider view of farm family life. A third female researcher, JoAnn Jaffe, had done extensive international field work in peasant studies and farming systems research, and was able to bring an informed outsider perspective which helped to guard against researcher bias. Michael Gertler, who conducted the farm unit surveys, was able to bring not only a male perspective, but also his rural and academic experiences to further add to the substance of this exploratory study. In conversations subsequent to the interviews, the researchers were able to interpret and interpolate formal and informal information gathered at the interview sites that may otherwise have gone unnoticed.

The sample size did not allow for quantitative general-izations to be made between the respondents and the general population of Saskatchewan farm women. The data collected can only be used as an exploratory base from which to do further research. This sample of farm women was

not representative in a formal sense, but provided a window on the worlds of multi-family and single family farms.

The type of exploratory research conducted was a limiting factor in itself. If time and cost were not an issue, a systematic phenomenological approach to the study of these Womens' lives would have been instrumental in uncovering the structures and patterns of their experiences. Such research would have required in-depth field inquiry and documentation of every part of a subject's day-to-day life over an extended period of time. Such a detailed type of data collection and analysis was not feasible at this stage, but could be recommended as a further elaboration of the present project.

#### **CHAPTER 4. FIELD FINDINGS ON FARM AND HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION**

The field research undertaken for this study was designed to support the development of adequate conceptual tools and perspectives for understanding the situation and experiences of women in farming. Using a woman's standpoint as a primary entry point and axis around which to conduct an investigation, this approach also supported a more coherent analysis of the social economy of families in farming. As a component of a related set of field investigations focusing on multi-family, cooperative farming arrangements, this study was also designed to evaluate prospects for equitable integration of women into farming and rural communities under alternative models of organizational structure.

This study of forty-five women in thirty farm operations facilitated investigation of the social dynamics of gender relations under a wide range of farm business arrangements. The comparative framework, juxtaposing more conventional family farms with various forms of multi-household, multi-operator, farming operations, revealed similarities and differences, complexities and

contradictions, that might otherwise have remained unexamined. While this comparative approach highlighted some of the interactions between structural organization and women's experiences, it also revealed the pervasive character of patriarchal social relations in rural Saskatchewan. The field data specifically address several aspects of women's experiences in farming: her personal biography and farm background; her involvements in farm work, off-farm work, and farm management; her contributions to the mobilization of capital, land, and labour resources; her situation as a family and household member; her involvements in other aspects of rural community life; and her views of farming, the future of agriculture, and the prospects for women in farming. For the thirty women who lived and worked on multi-family operations, the field investigation also addressed the special circumstances surrounding participation, decision-making, formal membership status, and social relations under more complex (cooperative) forms of organization.

#### **4.1 Study Context: Changing Dimensions of Farm Organizational Structure**

In 1991, there were 60,840 census farms in Saskatchewan. Of these, 44,899 (73.8%) were categorized as "individual or family farms." Another 15,595 (25.6%) were categorized as partnerships (with or without written agreement), family corporations, or non-family corporations. The remaining 346 (0.6%) were institutions, community pastures, grazing associations, Hutterite colonies or estates (Statistics Canada, 1992a). The total farm population, defined by the Census of Agriculture as "all persons who are members of a farm operator's household, living on a farm in a rural or urban area," was 159,725 (Statistics Canada, 1992b).

Until 1991, the Census of Agriculture counted only one "operator" per farm enterprise--there was no provision for reporting more than one operator. Starting with the 1991 Census, the census questionnaire was modified to allow the reporting of more than one operator. It defined operators as "those persons responsible for the day-to-day decisions made in the agricultural operation of this holding" (Statistics Canada, 1992a). In Saskatchewan, respondents to the 1991 Census reported only one operator on 43,900 farms

(72.2% of all farms). Lone male operators reportedly ran 95.5% of these farms, while 4.5% were reported to be managed by a lone female operator. Two operators were reported on 15,005 farms (24.7%). Of farms reporting two operators, 84.8% included one male and one female operator--typically a husband and wife team (Statistics Canada, 1992b). Two male co-managers were recorded on another 15% of these two operator farms. Two women operators were jointly managing the remaining 0.2% of these farms. Three or more operators were reported on 1,935 farms (3.2%). On 69.1% of these farms, male and female operators worked together. Farms with only male operators accounted for 30.7% of the farm operations in this category. The remaining 0.3% of farms with three or more operators was co-managed by women.

Every farm is a unique combination of resources, people, and organizational arrangements. Together, the number of households and people involved in the farm operation, the number of male and female operators, and the business arrangement(s) under which they operate can be treated as principal components or parameters of farm organizational structure. Farm operations range--in scale and organizational complexity--from one-operator units

organized as individual or family holdings at one extreme, to multi-operator, multi-household, incorporated or co-operative farms at the diagonal extreme of this multi-dimensional spectrum/array.

Partnerships, with or without formal written agreement, are the most common type of business arrangement other than conventional "individual or family farms." In 1971, 5% of all Saskatchewan farms were reported to be partnerships. In 1981, 7.9% of farms were recorded as partnerships (written or unwritten), and by 1991 this number had risen to 20.7%. Partnerships typically involve two or three operators who are related: husband and wife, brothers, or a father and son, for example. Other members of their families may or may not be involved in the farm operation as labour, land owners, or decision makers (Gertler & Swystun, 1992).

Like partnerships, the numbers of incorporated family farms and non-family farm corporations have become more important both in absolute and relative terms. Their importance is even more apparent when consideration is given to the share of agricultural capital and agricultural production associated with such farms. These corporate forms of farm enterprise accounted for 1.7% of Saskatchewan

farms in 1971, 2.8% in 1981, and 5% of farms in the Province in 1991.

Such farms may involve shareholders from only one nuclear family, but also common are farm corporations with several operating and non-operating shareholders representing two or three founding families, their spouses, and offspring. In the latter case, the distinction between closely held family corporation and non-family farming corporation becomes a matter of degree. Further along this continuum are farm enterprises established by investors who are not related and who may or may not have farming as their principal occupation (Gertler & Swystun, 1992)

In family and non-family farm corporations there may be various classes of shares with associated managerial and financial prerogatives attached. There is not necessarily an equalization of equity among shareholders, nor any formal implementation of a one-person, one-vote management regime. Cooperative farms, agripools, and machinery co-operatives are the only forms of farm business organization where this is a cardinal principle. These incorporated farm businesses, with co-operative bylaws and cooperative legal status, are considerably rarer--there are only a few dozen in total. As production cooperatives, they use a

cooperative model for ownership and control of agricultural assets. Every member has one vote regardless of level of equity. Generally, though not in every instance, these production cooperatives involve close relatives (Gertler & Swystun, 1992).

The most common type of agricultural production cooperative in Saskatchewan is the machinery cooperative. Members own or lease land on an individual basis. Machinery is owned collectively in the name of the cooperative, and cropland is worked jointly as if it were a single farm unit. Members are responsible for a share of labour and other production inputs proportional to their share of total cultivated acreage. Harvested crops are pooled and members receive a share of the proceeds in proportion to their land contribution (Gertler & Swystun, 1992).

A small number of farms have taken the level of collective enterprise some steps further. Under the "agro-pool" formula, members lease land to the cooperative and, in return, receive rent, wages for hours worked, and an equal share of any surplus. Under the more fully integrated cooperative farm model, the cooperative owns land in its own right, or leases acreage from the crown or other third parties. The cooperative also owns all buildings, machinery

and livestock. Member-directors pay themselves wages for hours worked, plus a share of any year-end surplus. Whereas members enjoy equal legal standing with regard to control and management, under all these cooperative forms only certain individuals have full membership status (Gertler & Swystun, 1992).

The organizational structures outlined above are represented in the thirty farms examined in this study. The comparative framework of this research was based on a division of farms into two general categories--conventional family farms, on the one hand, and multi-family farms, on the other. This simple comparative framework is used only as a guide to illustrate the many complex and multi-dimensional ways in which people come together as a unit to farm.

#### **4.2 Selected Farm Characteristics**

In this section, selected findings from the farm unit survey and the farm women survey are extracted to provide contextual information on agronomic, economic and organizational characteristics of the farm operations that were the field sites for this research. This provides the background against which one can begin to understand the

realities, experiences and perspectives of the forty-five farm women interviewed for this project.

As has been reported above, the fifteen group farms studied included eight organized as machinery cooperatives, three cooperative farms, two incorporated farms, and two partnerships. These farms were compared to neighbouring one- or two-family operations which included twelve individual or family holdings, one partnership, and two incorporated family farms.

The average size of the multi-family farms studied in 1989 was 5966 acres, with a mean area of 4439 acres under cultivation (Table 4.2.1). The "individual-type" (matched) farms were generally between one-half and two-thirds the size of the group farms, with a mean area of 2172 acres, of which 1882 acres were under cultivation (Gertler & Swystun, 1992). Both the group and matched farms in the sample were considerably larger than the average Saskatchewan farm, which the 1991 Census of Agriculture recorded as 1091 acres with an average of 597 acres under cultivation (Statistics Canada, 1992). The size of operations must be taken into consideration when looking at gender relations within a family farm household. As indicated in Chapter Two, some other studies have found a correlation between larger farm

size and reduced involvement by farm wives in farm decision-making processes (Wilkening, 1981).

While the multi-family farms were larger than the conventional family operations with which they were compared, this relationship was reversed in terms of acreage per operator. On the conventional family farms, the mean acreage per operator was 1681 acres versus 1341 acres per operator on the multi-family group farms (Table 4.2.1). The difference in terms of cultivated acres per operator was more significant. The group farms had an average of 973 cultivated acres per operator versus 1468 cultivated acres per operator for the matched farms (Gertler & Swystun, 1992).

While these findings are interesting and important, they are also subject to qualification. While seemingly straight forward, these statistics are sensitive to the working definition of "operator" used by the respondents and the researchers. The data reported here originated from the farm unit survey and, although objective criteria were used in determining the number of operators per farm, it should be noted that the primary respondents were always male. This, no doubt, had an influence in terms of who got

counted among those with day-to-day involvement in the management of the farm operation.

This reality came to light when women from the same farm operations were interviewed for the present study. These interviews made it clear that counting the number of operators in a farm operation was far from straight forward. Different individuals from the same operation, when presented with the same objective criteria could, at times, give a different count. This, of course, highlights the contingent character of the Census statistics which deal with the same issue. Moreover, a similar set of caveats could be attached to all the findings of this study and--by extension--any field research that relies on self-reported or researcher-imposed categories.

Returning to the issue of acreage required to support a given number of people under the two contrasting approaches to farming, the picture changes only in terms of degree when we include all adults in the calculation. Defining adults as people over the age of twenty, living, and working in some capacity on the farm operation, the comparison set of farms had an average 544 cultivated acres per adult versus 482 cultivated acres per adult present in the multi-family farms. This finding illustrates, that when

a more inclusive approach is used to count the participants in a farm operation, some of the apparent difference between the group and individual-type farms is reduced. While the group farms appear to support considerably more operators per cultivated acre, this degree of difference diminishes when all adult "participants" are counted. Viewed through a gender sensitive lens, this raises questions about the hidden labour of women and others not formally recognized as operators.

**Table 4.2.1 Size and Cultivated Acreage of Study Farms, 1989 (acres)**

		Group Farms	Matched Farms	Census Averages
Total acreage farmed	Mean Median Range	5966 5228 3040-14066	2172 1760 927-5760	1091
Acre farmed per operator	Mean Median Range	1341 1279 608-2429	1681 1360 880-3520	
Total area under cultivation	Mean Median Range	4439 4000 2664-9329	1882 1680 650-4550	597
Area cultivated per operator	Mean Median Range	973 1000 568-1600	1468 1245 650-3520	

In terms of cropping systems, wheat, barely and canola were the dominant crops on both sets of farms studied. The group farmers raised a greater diversity of crops and showed a greater propensity to experiment with speciality crops (Gertler and Swystun, 1992). Ten of the group farms

and nine of the comparison farms had commercial scale livestock operations; with the exception of one hog enterprise, these were beef operations. Similarity in terms of livestock operations was expected given that the comparison farms were selected with a view to matching with respect to resources and enterprise type.

Increasing the area worked with a given inventory of farm machinery is an important economic strategy. This can be accomplished by expanding the land base or by sharing machinery with other farmers. Relative to the matched farms, the group farm sample achieved significant savings measured in terms of capacity and dollar value of machinery (tractors, combines, seeding equipment) per cultivated acre. These savings were achieved largely through machinery sharing. The group farmers also had access to items of machinery and equipment that were, on average, larger than those used on the matched farms (Gertler & Swystun, 1992).

#### **4.3. Selected Household Characteristics**

The sample of women involved in the group operations shared a key similarity with their matched farm counterparts: both sets of women resided in individual households which are primarily nuclear family based. The

only crucial difference was that women from the group farm sample were more directly connected, through the production side of the farming operation, to several other households. To a more limited degree this is also the case on a few of the matched farms which have two principal operators residing in two separate households.

The group farm operations under study included an average of 4.9 households (range 2-11). On the matched farms there was an average of 1.6 households (range 1-2). Nine of the group farm operations involved only extended family: relatives by blood or marriage. In the remaining six cases, there was mix of related households and non-related neighbouring families involved. In the matched sample, nine of the farms had more than one household involved. In these cases, either a son, father or brother who resided in another home was involved (either full or part-time) in the production aspect of this farming operation (Table 4.3.2)

Approximately half of the homes in which the women respondents resided were jointly owned with their spouses, regardless of farming arrangement. An additional 40% of the women respondents on matched farms stated that the farm home was solely owned by their husband versus 20% for the

women interviewed on the group farms. In two cases, women from multi-family operations reported that they alone owned the family home. Seventeen percent of women interviewed on group farms stated that the home was held in the name of the cooperative. There were also two cases in which the interviewed women from the matched farms indicated that someone other than themselves or their spouses owned the home in which they lived (Table 4.3.1).

**Table 4.3.1 Ownership of the Family Home**

Ownership of Family Home	Group Farms		Matched Farms	
Husband owned	6/30	20%	6/15	40%
Wife Owned	2/30	7%	0/15	0%
Jointly Owned	17/30	57%	7/15	47%
Group Owned	5/30	17%	NA	
Other	0/30	0%	2/15	13%

The average number of adults living on and involved in some way with the farm operation was 9.2 on the group farms and 3.5 on the matched farms. The average age of the adults involved in both samples was approximately 42 years. The average age of adult women on the group farms was 42.5 years versus 44.3 years for women on the matched farms. The average age of adult men was 44.4 versus 46.2 years for the group and matched farms, respectively (Table 4.3.2)

As recorded in the farm unit survey, the number of principal operators involved on the group farms ranged from three to eleven (mean 4.8). On thirteen of these farms, no

female principal operator was reported. In one of the remaining cases, two of the six women involved in the operation were counted as having principal operator status. In the final case, one of seven women involved in the operation was classified as a principal operator. Ten of the fifteen matched farms had one principal operator. Of the remaining five cases, four were father-son arrangements and one was a husband-wife partnership.

**Table 4.3.2 Selected Characteristics of Farm Household Participants for Group and Matched Farms, 1989 (from the farm unit survey)**

Characteristics		Group Farms	Matched Farms
Years farm has been operated	mean	18.1	21.3
	range	6-33	4-37
No. of Households	mean	4.9	1.6
	range	2-11	1-2
No. of People involved (over 21)	mean	9.2	3.5
	range	6-20	2-6
Average age of People involved (over 20)	mean	42.8	42.5
	range	21-73	21-73
No. of Principal Operators <sup>10</sup>	mean	4.8	1.3
	range	3-11	1-2
Average Age Principal Operators	mean	45.5	47.6
	range	27-71	33-67
No. of Members	mean	5.8	not applicable
	range	3-11	

<sup>10</sup> Principal operators were defined as individuals with equity in the farm unit, and an active role in management and farm work.

The average age of all principal operators on the two sets of farms was likewise similar: 45.5 years on the group farms and 47.6 years on the matched farms. On the group farms, the average age of the male and female principal operators was very similar but on the matched farms, the one women principal operator reported in the farm unit survey was considerably younger than her male counterparts: 38.0 versus 47.5 years.<sup>11</sup>

Children under the age of 16 were present in 37% of the homes of the women surveyed on the group farms--an average of 2.2 children each for these women. For the single-family farms, the corresponding statistic was 53% of surveyed households--an average 2.3 children each. Children living away from home were reported by 59% of the group farm respondents versus 53% of the matched farm informants.

The majority of women respondents on both multi-family farms (70%) and single-family farms (60%) reported two adults (21 years and older) in the home. Seventeen percent of group farms reported three adults compared to 27% of

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<sup>11</sup> The Census of Agriculture for 1991 (Statistics Canada, 1992b) reported the average age of operators on Saskatchewan farms to be 49.1. This was 3.6 years greater than the average age of principal operators on the group farms and 1.5 years greater than the average for the matched farm sample. The study data are for 1989 which may contribute to the difference. This difference also reflected a sampling bias in this study: the selection process focused on farms that were commercial-scale, well-established, viable operations. The average years of operation for the group farms was 18 years, versus 21 years for the matched farm sample (Table 4.3.1).

matched farms. This difference was primarily due to a greater occurrence of grown children living at home on the single-family farms. Ten percent of group farm household sampled compared to 33% of matched farm households studied reported a daughter as the "other women in the home", although the majority of women in both samples (87% group farms, 67% matched farms) reported no other women in the home. Over 90% of women on group and matched farms reported the husband as the only adult male in the home; 27% on group farms and 33% on matched farms listed an adult son, and 7% of the matched sample listed a grown grandson.

**Table 4.3.3 Participation of Non-Resident Adult Children in Farm Operation**

	Not Involved		Somewhat Involved		Member/Partner	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Group Farm	16/25 64%	6/31 19%	9/25 36%	6/31 19%	0/25 0%	19/31 62%
Match Farm	6/9 67%	3/11 27%	3/9 33%	3/11 27%	0/9 0%	5/11 46%

According to the data reported by the two sets of farm women respondents, some adult children living away from home nevertheless maintain an active role in the farm enterprise. This is particularly true of male children, and seems to be more prevalent on the group farms than on the single-family units. Female adult children living away from home have much less (acknowledged) involvement with the

farm, whether it is a conventional family enterprise or a multi-family operation. This difference is highlighted by the fact that a majority of the group farm male adult children in this category retained full formal membership despite prolonged absences. In a parallel way, a significant fraction of the male children living away from the single-family farm households surveyed were also recognized as "partners" in the farm operation (Table 4.3.3).

## CHAPTER 5. FIELD FINDINGS: OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL

### 5.1 Management

Management input is crucial to understanding the experiences women respondents have within their respective farm-household units. The decision-making processes used in a particular farm have direct impacts on all participants. Management can be inclusive, exclusive, or some combination thereof, in relation to the women who live and work within a particular farming operation. Whether formally included or excluded, farm women perform many managerial functions in areas ranging from farming practices to child rearing. These contributions often go unrecognized by their male counterparts and even by themselves.

Certain farm organizational structures may have influence over whether women are included or excluded in the decision-making arena. For instance, in structures where the input of a particular women is recognized in formal terms-- either as a farming "partner" or as a "member" of a cooperative--they may be more integrated into the overall farm management regime. However, in many cases, even where women are accorded recognition as "operator,"

"partner" or "member," this may not translate into any more managerial control than for those women who have no such "status".

When the surveyed women were asked about their roles in day-to-day decision-making with respect to farm practices, 80% of group farm women (24/30) and 86% of the matched farm women (13/15) responded that their opinions were of lesser or no weight in comparison to "others"<sup>12</sup> involved in the operation. However, more matched farm women respondents were consulted about farm practice decisions (Table 5.1.1). This finding held true for decision-making in respect to machinery and equipment purchases, and to a lesser extent, land purchases and farm finances. In none of the above decision-making areas were women reported to have the last word.

In some areas of decision-making, a minority of surveyed women from group and comparison farms believed their opinion was of equal weight. The most common areas where women reported input equal to that of their male counterparts was in respect to land purchases and farm finances. In a majority of these cases, women respondents also considered themselves to be either formal members in a

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<sup>12</sup> Others referring to the male owner-operators involved in the operation.

cooperative-based farm or partners in a conventional family farm.

**Table 5.1.1 Women's Management Input (expressed as rounded %)**

	FARM PRACTICES		LAND PURCHASES ETC.		MACHINERY & EQUIPMENT PURCHASES		FARM FINANCES	
	Group Farms	Matched Farms	Group Farms	Matched Farms	Group Farms	Matched Farms	Group Farms	Matched Farms
<b>A</b>	57	33	33	7	57	27	53	7
<b>B</b>	23	53	17	60	23	60	10	67
<b>C</b>	7	13	27	33	7	13	20	27
<b>D</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>E</b>	13	NA	23	NA	13	NA	17	NA

**A = opinion neither sought nor considered**

**B = consulted but opinion not as important as that of others**

**C = opinion is of equal weight**

**D = often have last word**

**E = consulted by spouse but have no say regarding others in operation**

On some of the group farms, a small minority of women respondents replied that they were consulted by their spouse about farm practices, machinery purchases and farm finances but not by other members of the group. In terms of land purchases, 23% of the thirty group women respondents were consulted by their spouses in respect to land purchases but were not directly able to influence others in the operation.

Male dominance in farm decision-making, and lack of recognition for management contributions made by farm

women, has been documented in this research as well as in other studies (e.g. Shortall, 1992). It may be that the role of women in respect to key farm decisions on multi-family operations is diminished because of several related issues. As noted above, a relationship between increased farm size and decreased farm decision-making input by farm women has been found in other research (e.g. Wilkening, 1981). As farm size increases, the production sphere of the farm/household complex becomes separated from the household. The addition of hired labour and/or additional male owner-operators on such farms frequently leads to further reduction in farm management role for farm women.

Separation between household and farm production activities generally occurs along gendered lines: males become involved in the production sphere and women are left to raise children, look after the home, and seek employment off-farm. Furthermore, even when a woman on a larger farm has the desire to be more involved in farm management, she often has to overcome strongly entrenched patrilineal lines of control--whether these are cooperative or incorporated farms. Only in special cases, where women are recognized as full members of a cooperative, are they involved in farm management, and even then, this is not always operative. As

one woman from a cooperative farm stated, "I work in the fields, I look after the kids, but that doesn't mean I can say grow lentils this year, even if I know they'd be good." When cooperative farms involve several male operators, key decisions get discussed, first and foremost, amongst themselves. There may be correspondingly less discussions around the kitchen table.

In this study, the relationship between decision-making and farm size and organizational complexity was not quite as apparent on conventional farms, though they too were larger than the average Saskatchewan farm. The sample of women on comparison farms claimed more involvement in farm management, either as "consultants" or as "operator-partners." Ironically, this position of relative equality may have evolved more out of necessity than choice. For example, one of the matched farm women respondents stated that the only reason she had any influence over what land they buy or what crops they raise is because, "who else is he going to turn to, the cow?"

A lack of hired labour or other adult family members, may pull women into areas of farm management that are somewhat at odds with the traditional ways in which family

farms are generally managed.<sup>13</sup> However, a recognized role in farm decision-making by a female respondent does not necessarily translate into a parallel recognition as a "farmer" by other men or women who are from the same farm family, neighbourhood, or community. In some cases, women may become involved in the farm management process despite their own preferences for non-involvement, and despite conflicting demands on their energies. Already laden with the responsibilities of the household and family, in addition to working off-farm and being involved in other community activities, some women find themselves pressed into duty as farm hands, farm managers, and crisis trouble-shooters.

Further verification of the existence of gender defined management regimes is found when we turn to the decision-making roles women have within the household. With respect to home and household practices, 70% of the women respondents from multi-family farms reported their opinion was of equal weight to others and 30% recorded they had the last word. This compares to 40% of women on matched farms who said their opinion was of equal weight, 53% who said

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<sup>13</sup> This may also be the case in certain group operations where it is easier to recruit farm wives into the management regime than to expend resources to hire labour and other services.

they had the last word, and 7% who said they were consulted but their opinion was not as important as others.

As discussed in Chapter 3, "owner-operator" (farm operator) was a defining concept used in this study to differentiate multi-family farms from conventional family farms; i.e. individuals with equity in the farms and an active role both in management and farm work. A primary criterion for identifying a group/multi-family farm was the presence of three or more "owner-operators"--typically from corresponding numbers of households (Gertler, 1981). Based on the farm unit survey findings, there were only three women in the group farm sample, and one woman from the comparison farm sample, that were counted as operators when the criteria are applied in the narrow sense. Women, however, do provide many inputs such as farm labour, management skills, and capital contributions that would, other things being equal, qualify them as operators. As indicated by researchers such as Smith (1987), the difficulty in deciding who is or is not a operator lies in the way individual's contributions are counted and recognized.

As discussed, the qualifications required for a farm woman to be counted as a farm operator included the

criteria of ownership of capital and an active role in day-to-day farm management. In both the farm unit survey and the farm women survey, these rather conservative criteria were the starting point for determining whether a farm woman respondent was a farm operator.

Were we to broaden the optic to include other kinds of criteria in determining who is counted as farm operator, all of the farm women in this study could be recognized as farm operators. The wider angle lens would include: off-farm work; household work; child rearing; community and volunteer work; decision-making skills that includes more than just the day-to-day decisions regarding farm practices and finances; capital contributions that include co-signing of loans; mortgages, insurance and permit books held in their name; and, joint ownership of land, livestock or machinery. Furthermore, the many informal exchanges that farm women have with neighbouring farm families, town people, relatives, suppliers, creditors and others, that may benefit the short- or long-term viability of the farm/family/ household unit, are also of importance and should not be discounted.

Historically, males have been the only recognized farm operators. Women were not legally acknowledged as property

owners when Saskatchewan was first settled (Hedley, 1982). The control of primary resources by men on multi-family operations also has a long history (Gordon, 1978). Although such legal barriers no longer exist, present day statistics confirm the predominance of male proprietorship on single family farms and multi-family farms in Saskatchewan.

## **5.2 Membership**

The issue of "membership" was raised with multi-family farm respondents in both the farm unit survey and the farm women survey. "Membership" is a term which usually refers to those individuals who belong to a cooperatively organized business enterprise in which there is an equalization of equity (labour and capital inputs) and a one-person, one vote management regime. This is important, because membership formally and theoretically allows each participant to share in all aspects of farm production, management and labour, fairly and equitably. Such an organizational arrangement can potentially integrate young and old, as well as male and female members in an equitable manner. The obstacles to successfully organizing such a farming arrangement is not in the legal structure itself, which is potentially democratic, but in the selection and

implementation of who and who is not to be counted and recognized as members.

Of the fifteen multi-family operations that were studied, eleven were incorporated under some type of cooperative arrangement which is based on the fundamental principals of cooperation. The other four farm operations met the requirements of being included in the sample of multi-family farms because they had three or more principal operators and more than one household. However, whether formally organized as a cooperative or not, all group farm respondents recognized "membership" as another measure of a farm participant's level and quality of involvement in the operation. In this way, membership is re-defined in a broader sense to refer to those individuals who are involved in the farm in some capacity; have shares or equity in the cooperative, corporation, or company; and involvement in some aspect of the farm operation decision-making process (either through an equal vote or through a more informal participatory decision-making process).

The farm unit survey showed an average of 5.8 members per multi-family farm (range 3-11). In this survey, the male operators were asked to break membership down by gender (Table 5.2.1). In nine cases only males were

identified as members. In three additional cases, all women and men were classified as members. Of the remaining cases, one cooperative counted only a sole female as a member, out of a total of seven women involved in the operation. In the second remaining case, one of three women was classified as a member. And, in the final case, two of six women were counted as members.

In all cases where women were recognized as members by the male respondents, the women had to be either working full time on the farm or be involved substantially in the ownership of the farm enterprise. All of the men who were counted as members in the farm unit survey (69 out of a total of 74 adult males associated with these thirty farms) were also classified as principal operators. This was not the case for the adult women on these farms. Out of a total of 64 adult women associated with these farms, only 21 were recorded as members (33%), and only three (n=21) of these female members were also counted as principal operators.

A number of irregularities were found when cross-checking the male (perspective) responses in the farm unit survey, with the female perspectives recorded in the farm women survey. For example, thirteen of the group farm women

respondents (43%) counted themselves as members<sup>14</sup> however, in only three of these instances did their responses matched the male perspective recorded in the Farm unit survey.

In many cases the women who are seen by themselves or others to be members, do not have an active role in farm management. The following are comments given in response to questions which about this situation. Three women said, "the farm men just don't want us." On one particular cooperative farm, the older woman interviewed stated, "I'm not active, I just feed them and feed them a lot." The younger woman answered abruptly by saying, "I'm not active and would damn well like to be one. [I] try to get involved even if men don't like it." Their comments suggest that while they are told they are members by the male member/operators, they are not welcome to become actively involved directly in the farm production sphere. In the case of the two women from the same group farm, responses to this question suggest a possible generational difference when it comes to desire to be directly involved in farming activities.

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<sup>14</sup> It must be noted that results from the farm women survey only represent the sub-sample of thirty women interviewed and not the entire sample of women who live on the farms.

Women respondents who belonged to multi-family operations and were not seen as members gave two similar but fundamentally different responses when asked why they were not included. As represented in this comment, one common answer was "they won't consider us, just don't want us." Non-membership status is here associated with a sense of resentment and frustration due to lack of control over issues that affect her future as a participant in the farm enterprise. It should be noted that there were no generational differences in responses from women in this particular group operation.

The other common response was perhaps more passive, accepting, and matter-of-fact, as illustrated by the observation: "women just aren't part of an operation." Farm women respondents who provided this kind of commentary are representative of those women who tend to accept traditional roles in the farm enterprise without challenging existing structures. Of course, their subjective reality may accommodate a structure that does not always operate in their best interests, but enforces conformity to a male-defined vision of necessary and "natural" division of labour. Whether they choose to

"resist" this regime or not, does not alter the fact that they were denied entrance/ membership to begin with.

### **5.3 Equity**

In a section of the questionnaire focusing on resource mobilization, all forty-five women respondents were asked about their capital contributions and how this capital was utilized by their respective households/farm enterprises. In a rural sector characterized by private ownership of resources, capital input or equity is a widely accepted and tangible measure of one's position/status in a farming operation. Unfortunately, it proved difficult to garner open and informed answers to some of the questions in this section. This problem seemed to be linked to three potential factors. First, some of the questions themselves were not particularly well designed, and therefore, did not elicit the kinds of information intended. Second, many of the women were uncomfortable in answering questions that dealt with economically sensitive parts of the operation. This is a fairly common response from anyone involved with a personal business, and perhaps to be especially likely in the case of someone who lacks "licence" to divulge such information, given her subordinate status in the enterprise

hierarchy. Third, and perhaps most telling, may be the manner in which such (non)responses directly reflect the organizational and operational realities of the enterprise. Quite simply, women may not have the answers because they are not members or operators and therefore are not privy to information that deals with the financial aspects of the farming operation--or at least lack a working knowledge of such details.

The primary resources of the farm enterprise are land, machinery, financial capital, and labour and management inputs. These resources are seen as essential to the continued viability of the farm. Household labour, child care, volunteer work, and community networking are typically viewed as secondary contributions. Each actor within the farm household unit contributes some type and amount of resources--primary or secondary.

Research on resource mobilization (i.e. accessing and contributing resources for the farm enterprise) also reveals differences between female perspective reality, male perspective reality, and a broader composite reality. Such differences become visible when we focus on issues of equity and control. There was considerable variation in equity involvement of the forty-five women respondents in

their respective farm operations. More women on group farms (60%, n=30) held land jointly with male spouses than their matched counterparts (40%, n=15). No women in the group farm sample rented or owned land in their own name compared to 20% (n=15) on matched farms.

Of the thirteen women on group farms who stated that they were full members, one owned land in her own name and seven owned land jointly with their spouse; of the seventeen women who said they were not members, two owned land in their own name and seven owned land jointly. These results suggest that property ownership, either alone or jointly, does not necessarily translate into formal membership. The same holds true for women on matched farms, where in four cases women indicated personal sole ownership of some land, but in only one case did the woman get counted in the farm unit survey as an operator.

A surprisingly large fraction of the women interviewed were unclear about how much land they owned. Thirty percent of the women respondents from group farm operations did not know the acreage owned by their husbands, themselves, or jointly. The corresponding figure for the women in the matched sample was even higher at 53%. The inability of some of the women respondents to come up with an acreage

total for land owned by themselves and/or their spouses suggests isolation from key information about the farm enterprise. Certain farm women respondents may be disinterested in this aspect of the farming operation, but others may not be privy to the information because they lack the kind of "status" required--as an operator or member.

Twenty-seven percent (n=30) of group farm respondents had co-signed loans or had loans in their own name compared to 20% (n=15) of the women respondents on the matched farms. However, more women on single-operator farms (34%) than women on group farms (20%) were shareholders in a farm corporation or cooperative. This may have more to do with tax minimization strategy than with equity, just as some women's farm wages have more to do with tax benefits than with recognition and remuneration for their labour contribution.

The above findings on land, finances and shareholder status suggest that the financial equity that farm women have is usually difficult to distinguish and disentangle from the equity contributed by their spouse. This does not mean that at least some of this equity does not come from the woman, rather only that her equity is recognized and

tangible only when it is assembled with the land and capital contributed by her spouse. Moreover, some of the women respondents only have equity on "paper" to facilitate the accounting and financing of the farm operation. Such equity can rarely be recognized and claimed by her, to use for her own purposes.

In general, the women perceived themselves as making relatively minor contributions in terms of the assembly of capital for the farm, facilitating financing, and/or farm work. They also tended to underestimate and to discount these contributions. In contrast, women perceived their male counterparts as contributing significant amounts of land, capital, and labour to the farm. These findings suggest that the farm woman herself is more likely viewed as an "asset" than as a recognized founder and member of the farm.

Even though women in both samples contributed household labour and/or farm labour and off-farm income, only those who also contributed land, livestock, or capital were able to gain equal membership--and even then, not in all cases. It may be that equity is the necessary ingredient through which an active role in management can be attained. However equity itself is not a guarantee that

farm women will have a significant role in management,  
planning, or decision-making.

## **CHAPTER 6. FIELD FINDINGS: THE GENDERED DYNAMICS OF HOUSEHOLDS, FARMS, AND RURAL COMMUNITIES**

### **6.1 Personal History and Farm Experience**

For the farm women survey, two women were interviewed on each of the group farms. An effort was made to select women from different generations in order to reveal any divergence in experience and perception. Reflecting this effort to cover a wide range of ages and stages, 30% of the women interviewed on the group farms (n=30) were in the 26-35 age category, 23% in the 36-45 age category, 33% in the 46-65 age category, and 14% in the 65 years plus category. On the matched farms (n=15), 13% were in the 26-35 age category, 53% were between 36-45 years of age, 27% were in the 46-65 age range, and 7% were 65 years or older. The sample of women interviewed on the matched farm was therefore somewhat less diverse with respect to age, or at least more concentrated in the young middle-age range of 36- 45 years.

In both the group and comparison agricultural operations, a large majority of women interviewed reported that they grew up on a farm: 70% of the group farm women and 93% of the matched farm respondents (Table 6.1.1). An

additional 20% of the group farm women respondents grew up in rural towns or villages and 10% came from urban centres. The equivalent figures for the matched farm sample were 7% from rural centres and none from urban places.

Approximately 75% of the women respondents from both samples originated from the immediate neighbourhood or local community. The majority of the women respondents, from both sets of farms studied, became involved in the present farm operation after already having experiences on farms in their youth. As discussed below, in a small minority of cases these earlier farming experiences occurred on the same land where they now resided.

These women generally have farm and rural background/experience, as well as strong links to local farms or rural communities. Other things being equal, this would suggest that most of these women have the qualifications required to participate fully in the economic and social life of their particular farm and locale. Given the structure of rural culture and social systems, however, such qualifications do not guarantee a recognized role in farming as a farm operator, equality in marriage and household, or full status as a competent member of the farm community. Moreover, local experience

and connections may, in some cases, carry certain liabilities. Entry into non-traditional female roles has to be negotiated in a highly personalized and familiar context that may be historically hostile to such initiatives. The established social dynamics of kin networks and local communities can be very difficult to transcend.

**Table 6.1.1 Farm and Local Background of Women Respondents.**

	Where Respondent Grew Up			Area Respondent Grew Up		
	Farm	Rural Centre	Urban Centre	Local Neighbourhood (<10 kms)	Local Community (11-50 kms)	Distant Community (>50 kms)
Group	21/30	6/30	3/30	13/30	10/30	7/30
Farm	70%	20%	10%	43%	33%	23%
Matched	14/15	1/15	0/15	6/15	5/15	4/15
Farm	93%	7%	0%	40%	33%	26%

A very large majority of the interviewed women reported that they represented the first generation of their own family to be involved in the farm operation with which they were presently connected (Table 6.1.2). This was true for both sets of study farms. However, the picture is quite the reverse for many of the male farm members. Farm women respondents on the group farms indicated that in 93% of the cases, their husbands' family had been on the farm for two or more generations. The equivalent figure for the husbands of comparison farm women interviewed, was also high at 87%.

The large majority of surveyed women were first generation participants in the particular farm, yet the sample farms were generally the end result of two to three intergenerational transfers among relatives of the male operators, i.e. second and third generation involvements through the male line. The extent of commitment to male inheritance is further underlined by data which show that on the group farms studied, 62% of male not-at-home adult children were members but none of the females in the same category enjoyed this privilege.

These findings parallel other research that suggests intergenerational transfer of a farming operation rarely involve females other than through the "back door" by a process of death, divorce, or inheritance where there is no male heir (Hedley, 1981a; Hutson, 1985). The farms in the present study are likewise generally passed down through the male line. Farm women joining conventional family operations or multi-family group farms must deal with a long tradition of male dominated farm management that is reinforced by the presence of relatives--both living and deceased. Patrilocal marriage traditions are not limited to conservative groups in rural Saskatchewan such as the Hutterites. Women who enter farming typically do so through

marriage and without the benefit of familial continuity or the presence of immediate kin.

**Table 6.1.2 Generations of Family That Have Worked on Present Farm/Land**

	Generations of her family that have worked on the farm			Generations of his family that have worked on the farm		
	1	2	3	1	2	3
Group	26/30	2/30	2/30	2/30	17/30	11/30
Farms	87%	7%	7%	7%	57%	37%
Matche	14/15	0/15	1/15	2/15	10/15	3/15
d	93%	0%	67%	13%	67%	20%
Farms						

Although multi-family farms are often considered to be outside the mainstream of traditional family farming practices, in this respect they appear to conform closely to the dominant model. In fact, there is some indication that men on group farms are more likely to be farming land that was worked by their own parents and grandparents. This may reflect the relative longevity of (some) group operations which have successfully negotiated the transition from a single family to a multiple family organizational form, and subsequent intergenerational transfers.

Marriage was the most common means of becoming involved in the farm operation for the majority of women interviewed in both samples: 67% of the thirty women interviewed on group farms and 100% of the fifteen women

interviewed on the matched farms. A further 30% of the surveyed women on group farms joined with their husbands, as a couple, and 3% had grown up on the group farm. Two of the female matched farm respondents discussed above, stated that they contributed land and livestock to form a farming unit with their husband. Although this phenomenon was not studied in detail, these findings are suggestive. The pattern of joining group farms fairly frequently involves recruitment of a couple who may or may not be related to some existing members of the operation.

Data on the ethnic backgrounds of farm women in the study samples revealed a greater degree of cultural diversity on group farms (Table 6.1.3). Respondents on multi-family farms identified the majority of their mothers as either English (27%), German (23%), Dutch (17%) or Scottish (13%). Likewise, the majority of their fathers were identified as either English (27%), German (20%), Irish (13%) or Dutch (7%). Results from the matched sample told a rather different story: 60% of mother's and 47% of father's were identified as German. Irish, Scottish, Ukrainian, Dutch, and Polish origins each accounted for a small percentage. As documented by Salamon(1992)in the U.S. Midwest, people of German origin here also appear to

account for a disproportionate share of surviving individual-type operations.<sup>15</sup>

Table 6.1.3 Farm Women's Ethnic Background by Farm Type

Ethnic Background	Group Farms		Match Farms	
	Mother	Father	Mother	Father
English	8/30 27%	8/30 27%	0/15 0%	2/15 13%
	27%		7%	
German	7/30 23%	6/30 20%	9/15 60%	7/15 47%
	22%		53%	
Dutch	5/30 17%	4/30 13%	1/15 7%	1/15 7%
	15%		7%	
Irish	2/30 7%	4/30 7%	1/15 7%	1/15 7%
	10%		7%	
Scotch	4/30 13%	2/30 7%	1/15 7%	0/15 0%
	10%		3%	
Ukrainian	1/30 3%	2/30 7%	1/15 7%	2/15 13%
	5%		10%	
French	1/30	2/30 7%	0/15 0%	0/15 0%
	5%		0%	
Polish	1/30 3%	1/30 3%	0/15 0%	1/15 7%
	3%		10%	
Other	1/30 3%	1/30 3%	2/15 13%	1/15 7%
	3%		10%	

For whatever combination of reasons, the group farms in this sample seem to include relatively larger numbers of people from the so-called charter groups of Canadian Confederation: those originating from the British Isles and from France. Relative privilege, early arrival,

<sup>15</sup> Given the small, non-random sample, this assertion must be viewed as rather tentative.

identification with and access to government agencies, density in the parent population, and experience with cooperative institutions may be among the factors that link ethnicity to involvement with group operations--especially those taking a cooperative form (see, for example, McLaughlin, 1996).

Religious affiliations were more consistent across both samples: 37% of the surveyed women on group farms and 33% of the women from the comparison farms said they belonged to the United Church; 17% and 27% respectively stated they were Roman Catholic; and 13% and 20% respectively identified themselves as Lutheran. Religious affiliation and ethnic background were often linked. In both study samples many of the women who stated they were of German descent were also Lutheran or Roman Catholic (Table 6.1.4).

Some 23% of the women queried on the group farms claimed no affiliation as compared to 7% of the women from the conventional family based farms (Table 6.1.4). It may be that group farms are associated with less intense forms of religious practice/affiliation because both represent a break with traditional rural social forms i.e. the pious, observant woman immersed in an intensely familial setting

associated with the classic nuclear family and family farm. Moreover, it may be that group life in the multi-family farming operation replaces some of the community life and communal practices normally associated with certain more authoritarian, centralized and interventionist religions (e.g. Roman Catholicism and Lutheranism). Again, given the small sample, these observations must be taken as speculative.

**Table 6.1.4 Religious Affiliation of Woman Respondents by Farm Type**

Religious Affiliation	Group Farms		Matched Farms	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
None	7/30	23%	1/15	7%
Roman Catholic	5/30	17%	4/15	27%
Anglican	1/30	3%	1/15	7%
Lutheran	4/30	13%	3/15	20%
United	11/30	37%	5/15	33%
Mormon	2/30	7%	0/15	0%
Orthodox	0/30	0%	1/15	7%

A large majority (80%) of the women interviewed on group farms had at least a grade 12 education compared to 60% of women interviewed on the comparison farms (Table 6.1.5). Levels of post-secondary education did not show the same contrast, as 47% of both samples had no post-secondary education. A more marked difference was found in the type of post secondary training received. Twenty-three percent of women surveyed on group farms had some level of technical education compared to 46% of the matched sample; however, 30% of the women from the group farm sample had

some university education compared to 7% of the women from the matched sample.

**Table 6.1.5 Education Background of Farm Women Respondents by Farm Type**

Education Level	Group Farms		Matched Farms	
Less than Grade 12	6/30	20%	6/15	40%
Grade 12 Diploma	24/30	80%	9/15	60%
Post Secondary Courses	16/30	53%	8/15	53%
Some Technical	1/30	3%	2/15	13%
Technical	6/30	20%	5/15	33%
Some University	4/30	13%	0/15	0%
University Certificate/Degree	5/30	17%	1/15	7%

Interestingly, all of the women with post-secondary training from the matched farms came from a farming background and took courses that were unrelated to agricultural areas. This training was geared towards off-farm employment in typically "female" occupations such as cosmetology, home care aid, and secretarial work. In the sample of group farm women, post secondary education generally took the form of university training--also in non-agricultural areas. Five of the women had some liberal arts courses. Three had courses or a degree in education and one had a law degree. Three of these university-educated women had an urban background.

In looking at the above findings it could be speculated that the women from the conventional matched farms had focused their education towards courses that would give them technical training which they could then

use to attain a job in an urban or rural setting. In the case of the group farm sample, many of the women attended university prior to their involvement in agriculture. In the cases of the women respondents who were from a farm background, university was sometimes a means of "escape." For example, one of the group farm women who had taken courses in liberal arts stated, "university was a way to get out of this for awhile, guess it didn't work."

When the sample of group farm women respondents (n=30) were asked if they had taken continuing education courses, 80% reported none. Of the 20% who had taken some courses, 17% had taken a computer course, and 3% had taken motor vehicle mechanics. On matched farms (n=15), 53% had some continuing education courses. The top draws were computers (27%), motor vehicle mechanics (13%), and machinery operation and repair (7%).

Respondents listed a wide variety of courses when asked about possible future educational plans: computers, business administration, agriculture, teaching, lab technician, hair dressing, health, gardening, music, sewing, and French. Forty percent of women from group farms had plans for future education compared to 47% of women from single operator farms.

Overall, surveyed women on matched farms showed a somewhat greater interest in continuing education, both in terms of courses taken and future plans. This suggests that some of the women may feel the necessity of taking further training to find more suitable off-farm employment. It is also interesting that some of the courses selected are in agriculture and related areas. It may be that formal training is one way that women--particularly those on family type farm operations--feel they can gain recognition and become more involved in farming. Moreover, it may be a way for women to explore their individuality and gain a separate identity apart from the family and farm unit.

## **6.2 Gendered Labour: Divisions and Revisions**

The division of labour within farm and family units (production and domestic spheres) cannot be neatly compartmentalized. Farm and family units are closely integrated, and it is the flexibility and porous boundaries of these units which typically allows the labour of women and children to be utilized on an "on-call basis" to meet the demands of farm production cycles such as seeding, harvesting, calving, or shipping. The priority of

production is a constant: everything else takes a back seat except, perhaps, off-farm work.

Survey results indicated a distinct gender-based division of labour in work on and off the farm. Over 70% of women in both samples recorded that they carried out the majority of household tasks, such as preparing meals, child care, cleaning, home maintenance, and yard and garden work. According to the women's perceptions, spouses did 17% of household tasks on group farms and 18% on matched farms, and children did 7% of household tasks on both group and matched operations. Other relatives and hired help were listed as very minor contributors. Studies done in Canada and elsewhere support these findings, indicating that farm women are still largely, if not wholly, responsible for household labour ( Smith, 1987; Buttel & Gillespie, 1984; Bokemeir et al., 1983).

Both the general character of family farm and the economic situation of particular farms play a role in turning women into a captive labour resource. On conventional family farms, as in some other spheres of commerce and petty commodity production, labour and property are combined. Labour is organized through kinship, and the division of labour is based on gender and age

(Friedmann, 1981). This can lead to forms and degrees of inequality not typically found in capitalist enterprises, because the farm enterprise is subject to the laws and practices governing family property and relations as well as those governing relations between employers and employees (Hedley, 1988).

Women essentially become a reserve army of labour (Buttel and Gillespie, 1984; Friedmann, 1978). They may run errands, deliver meals to the field, answer phones, drive grain trucks, and maintain the books, but their contribution is seen as irregular and ancillary to men's dominant contribution to farm production. This is evidenced by survey results regarding women's and men's perceptions of who qualifies as a member, and women's lack of input in decision-making processes. Some scholars have theorized that this gender inequality has to be sustained in order for the farm to perpetuate itself in the current agro-economic context (Shortall, 1992). Family farming as an economically viable organizational form rests on subordination of women and children.

Women respondents in both samples reported doing a variety of on-farm jobs on a frequent or occasional basis. In every category of on-farm job, a higher percentage of

women on matched farms were involved, although all women on group farms reported they did some type of farm work (Table 6.2.1). Taking meals to the field garnered the highest response level from both samples: 80% on group farms and 100% on matched farms. This was followed by delivering supplies or parts, and care of livestock/poultry. A low percentage of women on group and matched farms reported involvement in planning and managing farm operations: 20% in both samples.

Based on a 40 hour work week, women on group farms reported working an average of 10.8 weeks/year doing on-farm work versus 23.6 weeks/year for women on individual-type farms. The type of farm operation (i.e., grain, livestock, mixed) may account for some of the marked variation in time spent doing on-farm work. Most respondents found it difficult to assign an hourly or weekly figure to their work. As one woman explained, "it's hard to come up with a figure because you have to drop things at a moment's notice and go out and do something." Also, as post-interview conversations revealed, many women did not count errands such as moving trucks from field-to-field, to be farm work.

**Table 6.2.1 On-farm Work Done on a Frequent or Occasional Basis. (expressed as rounded %)**

Type of Work	Group Farms (n=30)	Matched Farms (n=15)
Drive equipment/trucks	40	53
Repair equipment/buildings	13	40
Feed/care of livestock/poultry	37	53
Take meals to field	80	100
Deliver supplies/parts	53	66
Grain/livestock loading/transport	27	40
Order supplies/parts	27	40
Plan/manage farm operations	20	20
Bookkeeping/paper work	26	33
Other	0	0

Group farm women generally perceived or reported their own farm work as less of a contribution than work done by other women in the group. For example, 80% of respondents said they took meals to the field, but credited 97% of other women in the group with doing the same task. Similarly, 53% of respondents said they delivered supplies compared to 90% of other women. These figures are interesting not only because they display a higher perception of involvement among other women, but because they point to an undervaluation of the respondents' own work contributions to their group farming operation. They may also reflect cultural norms that encourage humility and

discourage self-laudatory claims--even where such claims are quite justified.

Women on group farms were asked to describe their on-farm work as self-employed, unpaid, or paid. Twenty-three percent of respondents said self-employed, 53% said unpaid, and 23% said paid. Of the self-employed women, one stated she was paid \$4.50/hour plus a \$75.00 harvest bonus for preparing meals, but this woman had no membership status in the cooperative in which she worked. Of the unpaid respondents, one was, in fact, not sure. Among the paid respondents, three were paid from \$500 to \$1200 per month, two were paid \$7.00 & \$9.00 an hour<sup>16</sup>, one was given a "token" meal payment, and one did not know her pay rate.

Eight of the fifteen women on the single operator farms indicated they were paid a monthly salary ranging from \$396 to \$1000 per month. The range and amounts of payment are similar for both samples, but there is a marked difference between the percentage of women being paid for their labour: 23% on group farms compared to 53% on matched farms. It is worth noting that of the women paid, 3/30 group farm women and 3/15 matched farm women confirmed that they were paid primarily for income tax purposes. These

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<sup>16</sup>Calculating hours of farm work and hourly rates, this falls within the range of monthly incomes reported for the women above.

women were paid on paper only, and did not receive actual payment for their labour.

Finding similar results in their research, Shortall (1992) and Bokemeir, Sachs and Keith (1983) noted that women often consented to their own exploitation, viewing it as expedient for reproduction of the family enterprise, not to mention preservation of their marriage. They may also reject the concept of wage labour in connection with a family business. This said, it should be noted that wage labour is not alien to family farming. Employed productively, wage labour allows family farm operations to function despite the variation in available labour during the family life cycle, and despite variation in interests and aspirations among family members (Friedmann, 1981).

The context of being "paid" further illustrates how important production labour is seen in comparison to other work. When asked about their input in decision-making regarding farm production issues, women said they had little control, even when they were doing farm work. Paying women a wage does not give them more involvement in decision-making. The assumption generally supported by respondents in both the farm unit survey and farm women survey, is that looking after children and doing household

work is somehow not as central to the viability of the farm. The case of the woman given a "harvest bonus" for supplying meals to the field seems to further entrench this view, as it suggests these meals are more important than all other meals made throughout the year, and thus deserve remuneration.

Off-farm labour was an important activity for women in both farming types: 57% of women interviewed from group operations and 47% of the surveyed women from individual-type operations had a job off-farm (Table 6.2.2). In terms of number of years worked, women on group farms recorded a higher mean (9.5 years) than women on matched farms (5.3 years).

Twenty-seven percent of the surveyed women on group farms worked full time off-farm (over 40 weeks a year) compared to 20% of women on single-operator farms; 20% worked part time (21-40 weeks) compared to 13% of the matched sample; and 10% worked casually (less than 20 weeks) versus 13% of the matched sample. Seven out of the 17 women on group farms who worked off-farm reported a gross annual income over \$20,000 compared to only 2 of the 7 women on matched farms. In both samples, these respondents were working full time.

The majority of group farm women (70%) and matched farm women (71%) worked for wages. The minority were self-employed, although 12% of group farm women indicated they were self-employed with hired help. Of the five women who were self-employed without hired help, four were part-time piano teachers and one was a part-time hairdresser. Of the two women who were self-employed with hired help, both were from group farms: one co-owned a clothing store and the other owned a beauty salon. Both worked full time.

Research has shown that off-farm labour is a continuing trend among Canadian farm men and women as an important means of supplementing farm incomes left vulnerable by volatile markets and rising inputs costs (e.g. Dion and Welsh, 1992). Study results tend to conform to reported trends in off-farm labour. An overwhelming majority of women from both group and comparison farms reported that they worked primarily to supplement the farm or household income, 87% and 90% respectively. However, many of these same women also indicated that off-farm work gave them the opportunity for a career, or as simply a change of pace.

Table 6.2.2 Off-farm Work Characteristics: Employment Categories and Income Level

Work Type	Group Farms		Matched Farms	
Did work off farm	17/30	57%	7/15	47%
Working for Wages	12/17	70%	5/7	72%
Self-employed without hired help	3/17	18%	2/7	28%
Self-employed with hired help	2/17	12%	0/7	0%
Income above 20,000	7/17	41%	2/7	28%
Income below 20,000	10/17	59%	5/7	72%

While supplementary income is important, farm women may have other meaningful reasons for engaging in off-farm labour. First, this is income that they control themselves; second, there is more input and recognition in their workplace; and third, the labour is recognized by all farm participants as productive because an income is attached. These three elements are not generally present in the work farm women do in the domestic sphere.

Research has also shown that off-farm labour increases women's total work load. Balancing off-farm and household work becomes a trade-off between earned income that is funnelled back into the farm household, and unpaid labour which supports farm production. It is possible that on multi-family farms, the women who are not involved in off-farm work facilitate this balancing act by taking on more household work, such as child care and meal preparation.

For women on conventional family farms, the picture is

somewhat different. They do not have other women to rely on for household support while they go off to work. This may explain why 100% of children under the age of 16 help out with household tasks. It is interesting to note here, however, that on group farms where there are potentially other women to rely on for certain kinds of household support, 87% of children under age 16 also help out with household tasks.

**Table 6.2.3 On-Farm Work Done By Children (under 16 years)  
(expressed as rounded %)**

Type of Farm Work	Group Farms		Matched Farms	
None	1/16	6%	0/8	0%
Yard and Garden	14/16	87%	8/8	100%
Field work	11/16	69%	1/8	12%
Work with Livestock	9/16	56%	5/8	62%
Work on other Farm	2/16	12%	0/8	0%
Non Farm work for others	1/16	6%	0/8	0%

Children continue to be a labour resource on both group and individual-type farm operations, but there is a noticeable difference in the reported role of children in the group and matched farm samples. On group farms, women reported that 87% of their children under age 16 worked in the yard and garden, 69% worked in the field, and 56% worked with livestock. A minority (18%) worked on another farm or did non-farm work for others, and 6% did not work at all. On matched farms, 100% of children under 16 years in the survey worked in the households, yard, and garden

and 62% worked with livestock. However, only 12% reportedly worked in the field, and none worked on another farm or did non-farm work for others (Table 6.2.3).

Between the ages of 16 and 21, children on matched farms appeared to catch up on the workload (Table 6.2.4). Eighty percent worked in the yard and garden and/or with livestock compared to 84% on group farms, 40% work in the fields compared to 69% on group farms, and 20% worked on another farm versus 15% on group farms. In general, children on group farms appear to be working in the fields earlier than their matched farm counterparts. This is an interesting finding given the reported problems integrating children into the work life of group farms (see below).

A gender-based division of labour is a key factor in the ability of farm families to adapt to economic, social and socio-political changes. The narrow definition of "farm work" excludes household tasks, which means that important contributions of farm women go largely unnoticed. Survey results, for example, demonstrated that women do the majority of household work, but that the women considered such work less important than field or farm yard production work. Women's contributions of household labour effectively

free their spouses to concentrate on higher status work, that is, "farming" (Shortall, 1992).

**Table 6.2.4 On-farm Work Done by Youth (age 16-21 years)**  
(expressed as rounded %)

Type of Work	Group Farms		Matched Farms	
None	1/13	8%	0/6	0%
Yard and Garden	11/13	85%	4/6	67%
Field work	8/13	61%	2/6	33%
Work with Livestock	10/13	77%	4/6	67%
Work on other Farm	2/13	15%	1/6	17%
Non Farm work for others	5/13	38%	1/6	17%

Labour is needed for production and labour must be physically and socially reproduced to keep farm units viable. Farm women do not see many of their labour roles as really "work." Women and children provide farms with a renewable source of cheap, invisible, flexible labour. Farm women often take on extra labour duties in order to maintain the integrity of the farm family household unit. This may involve additional on-farm work, as well as off-farm work. In some cases, women work off-farm to escape traditional roles they are expected to shoulder within the family farm even if this means a double or triple work load.

Whether it is their choice or not, women who live and work on multi-family farms are often afforded a sort of freedom from farm tasks that many women on conventional

farms are required to do. This allows them the freedom to embark on off-farm careers or employment but, on the other hand, may make them feel like they have little role in the farm operation to which they belong. Like their conventional farm counterparts, these farm women must still discharge the obligations of motherhood and housekeeper. As the findings suggest, many farm women who work off the farm find their wages being recycled back into either the farm production unit or household out of necessity.

### **6.3 Living in the Rural Community and Beyond**

This section focuses on social relations beyond the farm gate. Aspects of community life and relations with neighbours and relatives are examined. The views of the farm women, with respect to women in farming and their views on family farming in Saskatchewan are also discussed.

Family farms are not isolated units, they are intertwined in a web of relationships with other farm families and rural non-farm people who together make up rural communities. It is often farm wives residing in these communities who create and maintain the organizational structures needed to promote a sense of place and common

identity. Usually without acknowledgement in a monetary or any formal manner, farm women have freely given many volunteer hours and much energy to provide the social occasions and organizations that comes to be recognized as "community." These "volunteer" roles can be crucial to individual and collective survival in farm communities that might otherwise disintegrate as economic and social pressures increase.

Although many types of agrarian community interactions are on the decline, a large majority of the forty-five women respondents surveyed reported that they still belonged to a number of community organizations. Women from individual-type farms tended to belong to a wider variety of organizations and their activities were more specific in nature e.g. home care unit of the hospital auxiliary. Women from both samples identified personal gratification and the chance to be on their own as the main personal benefits of belonging to these community organizations.

Although the farm women interviewed indicated that they were active in a number of community organizations, they also responded that they did not have much free time for recreational activities or socializing with others in or outside of their community. This was reflected in the

responses given by women to the question regarding how their visiting patterns have changed over the last ten years.

Sixty percent of women respondents in both sample groups stated that they spent less time visiting and socializing with people in the local area than they did ten years ago. The most common reasons cited, by both sample groups of women were family ties, declining communities, off-farm work, lack of time, limited finances, and availability of more passive entertainment such as television.

Although many farm women are experiencing the pressures of contemporary living, some of the survey of women reported involvement in family recreation activities (Table 6.3.1). The data collected seem to support the assertion that families involved in group operations may have more time for such activities due to the involvement of other adult farm participants who can carry on in one's absence. This has been cited as an advantage by both male and female participants of multi-family operations (see below).

Moreover, of the 40% of women on group farms and 23% of women on matched farms who listed other activities,

women in the group farm sample listed more "hands-on" activities, such as dancing, going to church, or playing games. Women on the comparison farms identified more passive activities: watching T.V., going to movies, and having coffee. This lends some support to the contention that multi-family farming may support a more active and communal involvement with activities--both within and beyond the farm operation.

**Table 6.3.1 Involvement of Families in Recreational Activities**

Activity	Group Farms n=30	Matched Farms n=15
Sports	67%	53%
Family Holidays	33%	13%
Visiting Friends	27%	13%
Others	40%	23%

When women were asked to describe what they liked and disliked about the communities they live in there were no marked differences found in responses between the two groups of farm women respondents. Peace and quiet, the environment it offered for raising children, the fact that people worked together, the independence and space, the freedom, their friends, and the fact that "it's home" were all common answers.

Some of the dislikes listed by women from both sample groups included condition of the roads, travel time,

isolation, population decline, gossip, cliquishness, lack of facilities, and lack of activities for children.

Moreover, there were few positive responses when women were asked about the changes they foresaw in their communities over the next five to ten years.

Almost all the women surveyed foresaw declining populations and a decrease in both business and community services. This loss of services raised concerns about the fate of remaining farms and towns. One of the matched farm women said she saw the "small town dying out", and nothing for young people unless they commuted to big cities. A woman from one of the group farms saw "seniors dying, bankruptcies, and having to rely more on each other for survival." Overall results did not indicate a positive outlook. The significance of this negative outlook is more obvious if one considers the potential role of communities in helping people to cope with the stresses involved in farming. For today's farm women, the decline of community simply adds to an already heavy burden.

Women respondents have strong concerns about the need for services for women (Table 6.3.2). High on the list for both groups of farm women respondents was the availability of agricultural courses and seminars relevant to farm

women, services for abused women, and counselling and support services for rural women. Lack of recognition for farm women's contributions was also of major concern for many of these respondents. The answers given in this latter category suggest that while farm women have a number of different managerial and labour responsibilities, recognition of this worth is no further ahead than in pioneer times. The large percentage of farm respondents who want farm courses to be made accessible and relevant to farm women suggests these women want to gain skills and recognition.

The need for rural day-care was not given a high importance rating by all women respondents, although a markedly larger percentage of women on group farms rated it as very or somewhat important (70% versus 47%). Twenty-seven percent of group farm women rated day-care as not at all important compared to 46% on matched farms. In informal conversations with women who did not rate day care as important, the general gist of the comments were, "that's what families are for." The families they referred to included both immediate and extended members. It is interesting that the women from the conventional family operations were more likely to place low importance on day-

care. This may reflect more traditional attitudes towards child rearing and less experience with formal organizations. These numbers may also reflect the age and family status of the respondents, and involvement with off-farm employment. Finally, these responses suggest that multi-family farming does not solve all problems of child care.

In general terms, the women interviewed were asked to identify what were some of the most common problems and challenges facing families in farming. Women from both sample groups identified poor commodity prices, high operating costs, financing, bankruptcy, stress, young people moving away, weather and not having enough money. None of the concerns mentioned are surprising but it is worth considering what types of challenges were included and not included on their lists. Many of the challenges listed are related to the production side of the farming operation. In response to this particular open-ended question, none of the women identified challenges surrounding issues of gender, abuse, or farm organizational structure. Although not conclusive, this suggests that farm women share many of the same concerns as farm men but also that farm women have learned to discuss certain kinds of

issues publicly and not others. Perhaps this is self-censorship or perhaps it "merely" reflects male defined cultural patterns that take considerable energy to counteract.

Table 6.3.2 Concerns about the Position of Women in Agriculture.

	IMPORTANCE	GROUP FARMS %	Matched FARMS %
Contributions should be recognized.	Very or Somewhat	83	86
	Not at all	17	7
	Don't know	0	7
Courses and Seminars should be relevant	Very or Somewhat	96	86
	Not at all	3	7
	Don't know	0	7
Day-care should be available	Very or Somewhat	70	47
	Not at all	27	46
	Don't know	3	7
Should be increased participation	Very or somewhat	76	80
	Not at all	10	7
	Don't know	17	13
Services should be available for abused women	Very or Somewhat	80	87
	Not at all	17	13
	Don't know	3	0
Counselling and support services should be available for rural women	Very or somewhat	77	80
	Not at all	0	0
	Don't know	3	0

Despite challenges, problems, and various levels of integration and interaction, most of the women interviewed

reported fairly high levels of satisfaction with their local communities. On a scale of 1-10, ranging from completely dissatisfied to completely satisfied, the group farm women gave their communities a mean score of 8.6 versus 8.3 for the matched farm women. Nobody chose a rating lower than a 7. In response to the question, "would you say that the local community 'works' for you?" 87% of group farm women and 100% of their counterparts on more conventional farms answered in the affirmative. Again, this finding is worth a second look. While on the face of it, women appear to rate their local community quite highly in terms of satisfaction, this interpretation might be tempered by some other issues.

First, measures of satisfaction reflect a complex set of underlying factors including the management of public appearances. Expectations, as well, may have been conditioned by cultural norms that devalue, discount, or ignore community life. Finally, it is not clear that a score of eight is really a high score. Given social norms that may discourage public complaining to strangers and given the identification and ownership that many people feel towards their local communities, any score less than a nine or ten might indicate significant levels of

dissatisfaction. This latter point receives some substantiation from responses given by the women with respect to changes they could foresee occurring in their community over the next 5-10 years.

There were few positive responses when women were asked about the changes they foresaw in their communities. Almost all saw declining populations and a decrease in both business and community services. This loss of services raised concerns about the fate of remaining farms and towns. One of the matched farm women said she saw the "small town dying out," and nothing for young people unless they commuted to big cities. A woman from one of the group farms saw "seniors dying, bankruptcies, and having to rely more on each other for survival." Overall results did not indicate a positive outlook.

When the women were asked about informal exchanges of household, farm, and child rearing tasks with neighbouring farm families, the responses were often minimal or vague, and provided no clear evidence as to the frequency, extent, and quality of such exchanges. Although unfortunate, this fact in itself was revealing. When the women were asked whether they gave (or received) any of a number of kinds of unpaid assistance/support from people in households other

than their own, they often seemed puzzled or surprised that they would be asked such a question.

They seemed to have some problem understanding the relevance of such a question, either because such exchanges were seen as commonplace and unremarkable or, as discussed below, they could not readily perceive the connection to questions about their role in the farm operation. Additional problems may have stemmed from questionnaire design flaws. This particular set of multi-categorical, closed ended questions seemed to overwhelm the respondents. The effect, no doubt, was compounded by fatigue. By this time the informant typically had been answering complex and unfamiliar questions for more than one and one-half hours.

It is possible that better quality data could have been assembled had the question been more open ended, and had there been time for a more leisurely conversation, perhaps over several days. It is also possible that such experiences, by their very nature, could be more readily reconstructed in conversations with groups of respondents, rather than with individuals alone. Finally, it should be noted that other researchers have encountered similar problems when trying to reconstruct such histories *post hoc* (Shortall, 1992).

What little data was obtained on informal exchanges generally came in the form of side comments, observations, and responses to other survey questions. Broadly speaking, there seemed to be four patterns. One common situation described by approximately one-third of the forty-five respondents was that mutual assistance involving neighbouring households and farms was minimal. Instead they relied almost exclusively on individuals within their own household and, to lesser degree, on other extended family members in the area. These respondents tended to be more senior and to have grown children on whom they could rely. Another common response was rather matter-of-fact: "neighbours do the neighbourly thing." Further details were often difficult to elicit but the gist of the response generally was, if you need someone to look after the children or watch the house, there is always someone around to help out.

A third pattern commonly described was that reliance on help from neighbours or other extended family in the local community was again minimal, but these women generally indicated that they relied on their own friends, from the local town or elsewhere, away from the local community. The fourth pattern was specific to women from

multi-family farms. Approximately half of these respondents stated that they relied mostly on the other women associated with the group farm who were usually family or "like family."

It is not too surprising that information about the informal social economy of rural communities is often taken for granted and overlooked by the people that live there. Aspects of day-to-day living are sometimes invisible or unremarkable to those involved. Farm women, like farm men, tend to focus on the production and financial side of farming--much less on support, maintenance, and non-monetary assistance. Mutual aid, friendship, and support is assumed but not evaluated for its contribution to the economic and social viability of farming operations. Because these are the very spheres in which women take a major role, the overall impact of this process is to devalue and render less visible the contributions that they make.

The dominant rural culture focuses attention on production activities rather than on the less specific but crucial constellation of practices that undergird the social reproduction of family farming and rural communities. Even women who live in these communities may

dismiss mutual aid between farm households as "nothing." This reveals two things: mutual aid may be reduced under the stresses of contemporary agrarian life; conventional ideologies of family farming focus on the independence rather than the interdependence of rural households. Despite their experiences in non-conventional organizational arrangements, women on group farms still tend to subscribe to this dominant world view.

#### **6.4 Experiences in Multi-family Farm Operations**

Women on multi-family farms were asked directly about their perceptions of how their lives compared to women on more conventional family farms--in terms of involvement in farm activities and management, community activities, off-farm work, and interaction with neighbours. With respect to involvement in farm activities and management, 22/30 group farm women respondents (73%) stated that they believed they were less involved than their counterparts on conventional farms. This is an important finding and probably reflects real differences in the degree to which women from these two sub-samples were actively involved in farm work. The 7/30 group farm women (23%) who stated that they considered that group farming facilitated involvement of women in

farming were themselves working members of the farms on which they lived.

Most of the group farm women interviewed did not perceive the farm organization as having any affect on their involvement in community activities, off-farm work, or interaction with neighbours. Some did perceive an affect: 17% of the female respondents said they were more involved in community activities and 30% said they were more involved in off-farm work. In these instances the women respondents were not actively involved in the farming operation. These women were able to get involved in activities outside of the household/farm enterprise either as community activists or working off-farm.

Sixteen of the thirty women surveyed on group farms acknowledged the importance of having other women in the group. Two common reasons were offered: having someone for company and support and, having someone with whom to share meal preparation and other chores. Having other women near at hand also provides a sense of security and provides community in place of the relative isolation that many farm women face. Respondents who did not view the presence of other women as an important advantage may have had closer friendships and connections outside of the group. In some

instances they did not get along with the other women in the group operation.

When the respondents were asked if they felt their neighbours treated the farm or its participants differently because of its multi-family organizational structure, 60% answered in the affirmative. The two most common reasons given for this perceived differential treatment were, "they think we're rich", and "they think we're communists." Jealousy, criticism, scepticism and lack of understanding were also cited, as were positive comments such as "people think it's a good idea", and "people see we're successful."

The women interviewed on multi-operator farms identified a number of advantages and disadvantages as important. The key advantages included reduced machinery costs; less stress, isolation and physical risk; more sharing of experiences and/or specialization in particular tasks; and less need to rely on children or spouses for labour. The main disadvantages listed were that spouses may feel/be left out of farm activities; you were no longer your own boss; and personal and/or family lifestyles could become an issue with other members.

When this same question was asked on the farm unit survey, which was answered predominantly by male owner-

operators, the advantages most frequently cited as important were reduced machinery costs; increased security in case of illness or incapacity; less capital required to get into farming/greater access to credit; and sharing of experience and/or specialization in particular tasks. Key disadvantages were that spouses may feel/be left out of farm activities; relations with government agencies were more difficult; and decision-making was cumbersome, slow, and required extra effort.

**Table 6.4.1 Top Three Advantages of Multi-Family Operations:  
Male and Female Perspectives**

Advantages	Males		Females	
1. Reduced Machinery Costs	10/15	67%	22/30	73%
2. Reduced Stress	8/15	53%	12/30	40%
3. Sharing of Experiences	5/15	33%	11/30	37%

In both surveys the respondents were asked to go back through their responses and rank the top three advantages and disadvantages (Tables 6.4.1 and 6.4.2). Interestingly, the women respondents recorded the same ranked list of advantages as the male operators. These responses by both men and women respondents suggest that, regardless of one's role within the farm operation, all have a common sense of the benefits working with other families provides them.

The male and female respondents ranked the top three disadvantages in a somewhat different order. Both the men and women acknowledge that "spouses" may feel left out of

farm activities. However, male respondents tended to prioritize disadvantages that dealt with production issues while women gave priority ranking to disadvantages which related to family issues. Although rarely ranked among the most significant, 13/15 male respondents cited less reliance on children and/or spouses for labour as an advantage. It is somewhat incongruent but not inexplicable that almost all of these respondents also ranked "spouses may feel/be left out of farm activities" as an important disadvantage.

When asked if group farming had affected their views on the role of women in farming, 43% of the women interviewed on the group operations said "yes" and 53% said "no". The comments supplied along with these "yes" and "no" categories provided interesting insights into the actual experiences of women on group farms. Among women who said group farming had influenced their views, the actual affects identified were both positive and negative. Positive comments included: "I've been involved in group farming a long time and see encouraging signs ...", "Group farming provides a different insight on how things are organized, and women's participation can be valuable", and

"I know more about what other women are doing now as a member, I meet other women at meetings."

The more negative comments shed light on what group farm women feel is lacking in their experience. Comments included: "On single family farm you're more involved because you have to pitch in," "always wanted to see what it would be like to live/work on a single family farm," "wish cooperatives would let women in" and, "farm women work hard but our actual leadership role is not significant."

**Table 6.4.2 Top Three Disadvantages of Multi-Family Operations: Male and Female Perspectives**

Disadvantages Ranked		Farm Women's Response	
Male Operator Responses		Farm Women's Response	
1. Spouse may feel left out/be left out of farm activities	6/15 40%	1. Spouse may feel left out/be left out of farm activities	12/30 40%
2. Relations with government agencies become more difficult	6/15 40%	2. No longer own boss	11/30 37%
3. Decision-making is cumbersome and slow, requiring extra effort	6/15 40%	3. Life style an issue with other members	9/30 30%

Respondents who said the group farm experience had not affected their views on women in farming also had both positive and negative things to say, such as, "I'm involved in the operation because I'm assertive and want to be involved," and "I don't know any other way of life, but I wouldn't say I'm in farming because I'm not involved in farm operations."

Women in both the group and comparison samples were asked if they foresaw "changes in the organization of family farm operations, e.g. sharing arrangements, partnerships, corporations, and machine cooperatives." A similar percentage of matched farm women (60%) and group farm women (57%) answered in the affirmative. Some women on group farms were not shy about promoting the cooperative or multi-family model with comments such as, "group farming is the only way to go, farmers have to get over pride to survive" and "women are ready for the change, I hope men are too."

Group farm women who did not see the cooperative model as the direction of the future were more vague in their dissent. Their comments ranged from, "I don't see others getting into group farming" to "I see farms getting larger but no increase in cooperatives because farmers are too individualistic" and "I think there will be a decline in groups due to weaknesses in them."

Comments made by some of the 60% of matched farm women who agreed that such sharing arrangements were likely to increase included, "I can see group farms working if you get the right people" and "I can see partnerships occurring but being hard to manage." Of the 40% of respondents who

did not agree, some saw farming becoming more of a skilled profession, some saw larger, more isolated farms, and some saw viable family farms with women as equal partners.

## **CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSIONS: SOCIOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The comparative research framework used in this study is built around the distinction between single-family farms, on the one hand, and multi-family farms, on the other. These two categories/types of farm business structure or organizational arrangement provide a framework for analyzing the effects of farm organizational structure on gender relations in rural Saskatchewan. More generally, these thirty farm operations also provide a range of contexts in which to study the work lives and experiences of women under many variants of the family farm. In a sense, the field data can be entered into the analysis two ways: a comparison using neighbouring sets of fifteen multi-family and fifteen single or two family farms; a study of forty-five women on thirty Saskatchewan farms representing a range of organizational types.

Whereas this comparative framework provides a venue for quantitative and qualitative investigations of the gendered processes of farm production and reproduction, the categories single- and multi-family farm must themselves be unpacked and problematized. The single-family/multi-family

dichotomization forces a certain level of simplification on the social terrain. At the very least, it is important to recognize that the farms included in this study fall on a continuum or spectrum of organizational arrangements that range at one extreme from farms with only one household and one farm operator, to farms with several households and multiple operators.

Even if we recognize that differences in organizational arrangement are, at least at the margins, more questions of degree than of categorical or typological differences, we may fail to properly recognize the multi-dimensional and fluid character of farming households and their farm operations. These dimensions include: number of households; number of people living on the farm; number of these people working on or off-farm; number of non-family personnel working on the farm; who owns, controls, and manages the farm; number of generations involved; presence or absence of heirs-apparent; size and type of farm enterprise; financial health of the farm operation; land tenure, i.e. property relations under which land is held and used; formal-legal farm business arrangement(s); and informal farm business relationships, including working

relationships with neighbours and kin not formally included as members of the farm operation.

There is additional complexity where the multi-family farm is organized as some form of cooperative. On machinery co-operatives and cooperative farms, adult women may or may not be formally counted and recognized as members. Membership itself is a highly variably phenomenon: it can be formal/legal but lack substance, i.e. very limited in terms of actual management input. On the other hand, women who are excluded from formal membership may, nevertheless, be actively involved in many aspects of farming ranging from asset ownership, to farm work, to decision-making. Women on single family and multi-family farms may or may not be recognized as "farm operators," and they may or may not have formal control over farm assets and farm decisions--and there are many combinations.

### **7.1 Families in Farming**

Regardless of how many operators or households formally lay claim to the enterprise, it can be argued that all farms are, at least in some important dimensions, multi-family farms. This is particularly true if one shifts to levels of analysis that are, at the same time, more

macroscopic and more microscopically attentive to the everyday and extra-ordinary details of social life. The additional macro and micro factors, levels, or dynamics that require fuller investigation include: a longer time line that incorporates the historical development of the firm and the future plans/intentions of the people involved; a broader spatial-geographic perspective encompassing neighbouring farms, local communities, and regional linkages; attention to the market and non-market relationships that link generations and contemporary households; and gender and age relations, i.e. the intricacies of domestic life that connect household members and enterprise.

Family farms are all multi-family farms in the sense that financial equity, material improvements, and infrastructure generally have been put in place and elaborated over generations--by kin or by unrelated former owners and operators. The same can be said for the production knowledge and technical skills and the social networks, philosophies, and sensibilities--the culture of agriculture--that makes farms workable and reproducible. Family farms are reproduced in a web of neighbourly, kinship, and community relations. Family farms are

typically collective and social projects involving large numbers of individuals and households many of whom are not formally recognized as having a link or connection to the operation.

A clear reading of the connections between individuals, households, farm operations and communities requires critical attention to four aspects of the social construction of reality that are traditionally neglected. First, the reification of farm enterprises as radically separate and distinct entities—a sort of farm firm fetishism. This erects socially recognized, though nonetheless artificial, analytical boundaries around farm firms. In actual practice these boundaries are porous, permeable, and dynamically shifting.

Second, the same critical posture should be adopted when considering the household as an analytical category. Households are malleable entities that grow and shrink, form and dissolve according to season and purpose. They share resources and personnel. Households are socially constructed and household membership is subjectively as well as objectively defined.

A third critical analytical posture relates to the individuals who constitute households and operate farms.

These individuals are linked through objective and subjective relationships. The interplay of personal subjectivities, e.g. his or her assessments of work contributions, management roles, and membership status, produces shifting and competing definitions of reality that are negotiated or repressed. Personal perspectives are shaped by social processes (and structures), and become dynamic elements of these larger processes/structures.

Personal/subjective perceptions take centre stage in the everyday life of farm household but they also play a crucial role with respect to self identification as farmer, operator, or active member. This is an important issue where research on these topics is concerned--subjective perceptions shape responses to questions about farm life and farm activities.

This brings us around to a fourth aspect of the constructed reality of family farming: the centrality of women's experiences and perspectives in the life history of family farm operations and rural communities. The farm women's standpoint reveals a common set of experiences in which women are placed in a relatively isolated and oppressive environment that is linked to the maintenance of patriarchal farm authority. Such an environment can only be

understood and influenced towards emancipatory change by looking at the farm through the perspective of the women who are themselves socially constructed (and deconstructed) in this arrangement.

## **7.2 Domestic Commodity Production: Prospects for Cooperation**

Evidence collected in this study suggests that farm organization does have an impact on women's participation levels. According to data in this study and others, many farm women have gained a somewhat expanded role in farm decision-making and resource ownership. What is surprising, however, is that multi-family farm organization generally does not appear to provide women with a framework for equal partnership in farm operation, management, and ownership.

Farm cooperative organizations are based on the liberal-democratic model of cooperation where there is some commitment to democratic decision-making along with equal votes for all members regardless of equity inputs. In theory, such a structure would be open to inclusion of women as full contributing members. As with many other cooperative organizations, however, gender equality is still only a possibility.

Melynk (1990), Gertler & Murphy (1987) and Buttel (1990) have argued that multi-family operations are a viable means of keeping families in farming because they overcame some of the inefficiencies of single-operator farms while retaining some of their more attractive characteristics, such as management and control by owner-operators. Findings from the present study suggest this may be valid in terms of pooling of farm resources, sharing of labour, and collaboration on farm management. What is missing from these analyses, however, is an analysis of the micro-dynamics of gender relations within multi-family farms. The majority of women involved in the cooperative or cooperative-like organizations we studied, do not enjoy an equal partnership in the farm. Rather, ownership and control remain largely in the hands of male operators. Women may attain operator status, but typically only through the "back door".

A disturbing part of this analysis is that farm women themselves sometimes do not appear to recognize the extent of their exclusion and disenfranchisement. They see their contributions in the domestic sphere as just "something they do." The value of work in the production sphere is given higher status and off-farm work is perceived as

largely supplemental. Even in cases where women are involved directly in farming, if they do not own substantial property, they are not accorded and generally do not claim equal status or "membership". Ideologies supporting gender inequality are deeply entrenched on single family and multi-family farms in Saskatchewan.

Patriarchal arrangements are perpetuated by the roles that women have within the farm organization. There is a division of labour based on gender. Farm women provide a pool of labour that can be called upon when farm production cycle requirements demand it or when principal operators are incapacitated. That women's work in the domestic and other spheres provides the framework in which farm production and reproduction takes place is simply taken for granted.

### **7.3 The Culture of Agriculture**

The family farm is a complex interaction of two spheres of activity: the farm unit, or production sphere, and the family unit, or domestic sphere. Women are the principal link between these two spheres. In the production sphere, the primary goal is to generate revenue through farm production. The majority of labour and

decision-making is carried out by "operators" who are predominantly male. In the domestic sphere, the primary goal is the social reproduction of the family unit. This may involve some or all of the following: household work, farm work, off-farm work, and community work. The labour contributions of women who carry a disproportionate share of responsibility for many of these activities, are perceived as less important because they may not directly impact on revenues generated from farm production (Shortall, 1992), and because female labour is generally devalued/discounted.

The patriarchal structure of family farms has deep roots dating back to pioneer settlements where males were assumed to be the head of the family. Even in instances of immigrant settlements operated as collective or group enterprise, the notion of "equality" was misleading because it accepted male-dominance on key issues such as inheritance and decision-making, and failed to note that women were always subordinated (Hedley, 1982).

The patriarchal history of farming in Saskatchewan has a major impact on the position women play in today's farms. Though modern farms may be viewed as business operations, in a cultural sense they are still regarded as

a traditional lifestyle. Within this cultural reality, farm women continue to be largely responsible for and identified with household work, and as results of this study illustrate, are still experiencing subordination in decision-making and other processes. When a farm organization splits into separate domestic and farm production spheres, and so becomes more like other small businesses, it may further isolate and marginalizes women's contributions in the domestic sphere.

As the organization of farm operations becomes more complex, so do the gender relations within. Phillips (1989) argues that the political/ideological dimensions of rural households must be taken into consideration because they contribute to the ultimate form the household takes, specifically, that the rural household is created within the context of gender and age ideologies. This makes it important to understand more about the actual relationship between household ideology, and the experiences and daily negotiations of household members with different gender interests. Using the concept of household hegemony can also contribute to our understanding of the ongoing power struggles between men and women involved in farm survival strategies (Phillips, 1989).

This study indicates that while group farm operations may potentially be a means of helping women to gain equality in the rural landscape, at present women on group farm operations are typically at least as marginalized as their counterparts on traditional family farms. Emancipation/liberations of farm women will require more than organizational innovation. While organizational innovation is desirable, it is not sufficient. Changes must also be realized in educational institutions, in state policies and programs, in agri-business firms, in rural non-farm society, and broadly, in the whole cultural complex surrounding agriculture and rural life.

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APPENDIX A.1

FARM WOMEN NETWORK QUESTIONNAIRE - MULTIPLE OPERATOR FARMS

This questionnaire is designed to collect information about this farm and your role in it. There are sections which deal with the operation of the farm in 1989 and other sections which ask about the people involved, their connections to each other, and relations with people in the local community. We will need to move through the questionnaire fairly quickly in order to complete it in reasonable time, but we also want you to feel free to add comments where you think appropriate and to ask for clarification if questions seem unclear. While we are interested in your answers to all questions, you are of course free not to answer specific items or to end the interview at any time.

The interview will be treated as confidential. Only members of this research team will have access to completed questionnaires. No information pertaining to individuals or individual farm units will be revealed in study reports. Where excerpts from conversations are used, attribution will be handled in such a way as to preserve anonymity. If you have any questions or further thoughts about this survey, please feel free to contact us at the phone number and address provided.

Start Time: \_\_\_\_\_ End Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Respondent: \_\_\_\_\_  
Farm Type: \_\_\_\_\_  
Farm Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No.: \_\_\_\_\_  
Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

I. PERSONAL HISTORY AND EXPERIENCE

1. Where did you grow up? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Was this...  
\_\_\_\_ on a farm  
\_\_\_\_ in a rural centre  
\_\_\_\_ in an urban community  
\_\_\_\_ both urban and rural

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Could you tell me how old you were on your last birthday?  
\_\_\_\_ 18-25                      \_\_\_\_ 36-45                      \_\_\_\_ 66 or older  
\_\_\_\_ 26-35                      \_\_\_\_ 46-65

4. What grade did you complete in elementary and/or high school? Grade: \_\_\_\_

5. Have you taken any post secondary education at an institute or university?  
Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

5a. If YES, what level did you complete?

- some technical (no cert/diploma)
- complete technical
- some University (no cert/ degree)
- University certificate
- Ba/BSc.
- MA/MSc.
- Ph.D.

6. Have you ever taken any courses in any of the following areas?

- farm machinery operation or repair
- motor vehicle mechanics
- home economics
- farm accounts management
- other farm management
- field and animal husbandry
- a computer course
- other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

7. Please discuss any plans you may have to continue your education. Include any courses you are now taking. \_\_\_\_\_

8. What is your ethnic or cultural background on your mother's side of the family? \_\_\_\_\_

9. What is your ethnic or cultural background on your father's side of the family? \_\_\_\_\_

10. What is your religious preference? \_\_\_\_\_

11. How many adult persons (16 years or older) regularly live in your household?

No. of persons: \_\_\_\_\_

12. Can you tell me the names of all the women ( $\geq 16$ ) and their relationship to you?

Name	Relationship
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

13. Can you tell me the names of all the men ( $\geq 16$ ) and their relationship to you?

Name	Relationship
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

14. What is the total number of children under 16 years of age living in your household? \_\_\_\_\_.

15. Starting with the oldest child, give their age, sex and relationship to you?

Name	Age	Sex	Relationship

16. Do you have children who no longer live at home with you?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

16a. If YES, please give the age and sex of the person and their involvement, if any, with the farm:

Age	Sex	Involvement with the Farm

17. Please describe the circumstances under which you came to be involved in this group farm operation. Include your own previous farm experience, and the year you became involved in this group operation. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

18. Including you, how many generations of your family have worked on this farm/land?  
\_\_\_\_\_

18a. Including you, how many generations of your family have been part of this group operation?  
\_\_\_\_\_

19. Including your spouse, how many generations of his family have worked on this farm/land?  
\_\_\_\_\_

19a. Including your spouse, how many generations of his family have been part of this group operation?  
\_\_\_\_\_

20. Are you a full member of this group operation?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

20a. If YES, in what year did you become a member?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please discuss reasons you are or are not a member? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## II. HOME AND FARM LIFE

1. I'd like to ask you about your current home. Is it owned by someone living in your household?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

1a. If YES, by whom? \_\_\_\_\_

1b. If NO, who owns it? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What kinds of work do children (under the age of 16) do on this farm?

- none
- yard and garden work
- field work on acreage operated by group
- field work on acreage not included in the group operation
- work with livestock raised by the group
- work with livestock not being raised by the group
- work on other farms
- non-farm work for others
- other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

3. What kinds of work do young people (16-21 years of age) do on this farm?

- none
- yard and garden work
- field work on acreage operated by group
- field work on acreage not included in the group operation
- work with livestock raised by the group
- work with livestock not being raised by the group
- work on other farms
- non-farm work for others
- other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Does raising children on a group farm present any special advantages?

- children have more opportunity to get involved in the farm operation
- more playmates for the children
- more adults for children to interact with
- children have more free time/not so many chores
- parents have more time to interact with children
- other adults available to share child care responsibilities
- children have access to more playthings and facilities (eg. boat, pool)  children have more chance to get involved in organized sports, etc.
- parents can share driving of kids to community activities
- older children watch out for and teach younger children
- children learn how to share and cooperate more
- other, specify: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Does raising children on a group farm present any special challenges/disadvantages?

- children not as involved in farm operation
- more rules restricting the freedom of kids
- different approaches to raising kids leads to tensions
- too much responsibility for watching out for other people's kids
- conflicts among the children from different families
- children have less interaction with other neighbours/local kids
- other, specify: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

6. People working in group operations--as opposed to single family farm operations--typically identify a number of advantages. Please check off any advantages on this list that apply to this group operation. Feel free to add additional items.

- 1. Reduced machinery costs
- 2. Access to larger, more specialized equipment
- 3. Opportunity to diversify farm operation
- 4. Market advantages in buying and selling
- 5. Less capital required to get into farming/greater access to credit
- 6. Reduction of work load/hours
- 7. Sharing of experience/specialization in particular tasks
- 8. Less need to rely on hired help or can make better use of hired help
- 9. Less need to rely on kids or spouses for labour
- 10. Improved decision-making process/planning functions
- 11. Develops organizational and leadership skills
- 12. Reduced stress, isolation, and physical risk
- 13. Security in case of illness or incapacity
- 14. Improved benefits (insurance, pension plans, etc.)
- 15. Opportunity to pursue off-farm career/continue formal education
- 16. More time for vacations, hobbies, community activities, etc.
- 17. Facilitates retirement, farm transfers, estate planning
- 18. Better environment in which to raise children
- 19. Time off/financial support to take courses/continue education
- 20. Other, specify: \_\_\_\_\_

Please go back through the items you have checked and circle the three most important advantages.

6a. Please comment on the advantages and what you like most about being part of a group operation: \_\_\_\_\_

7. People working in group operations typically find that such arrangements also have disadvantages. Please check off any disadvantages that apply to this group operation. Feel free to add additional items.

- 1. No longer own boss/less opportunity for individual initiative
- 2. Loss of incentive for individual effort
- 3. Decision-making cumbersome and slow/requires extra effort
- 4. More accounting/records required
- 5. Higher tax load
- 6. Relations with neighbours become more difficult
- 7. Relations with relations become more difficult
- 8. Relations with local businesses become more difficult
- 9. Relations with government agencies become more difficult
- 10. Retirement/withdrawal of members disrupts operation
- 11. Intergenerational transfer becomes more complicated
- 12. Tensions due to differing financial needs/preferences of families
- 13. Personal/family lifestyles can become an issue with other members
- 14. Spouses may feel left out/be left out of farm activities
- 15. More difficult to integrate children into farm activities
- 16. Other, specify: \_\_\_\_\_

17. Other, specify: \_\_\_\_\_

     Please go back through the items you have checked and circle the three most important disadvantages.

7a. Please comment on the disadvantages and what you like least about being part of a group operation: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. How important is it to you to have other women around who are also involved in the group operation (either as participants or as spouses of participants)?

- Very Important
- Somewhat Important
- Not at all important
- Don't know

Why? Please comment: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. Do you feel that being part of a multi-operator farm affects the amount of involvement you have in farm activities/management--compared to being in a single family farm operation?

- more involved
- less involved
- no affect
- don't know

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Do you feel that being part of a multi-operator farm affects the amount of involvement you have in community activities/organizations--again, compared to if you were part of a more conventional single family operation?

- more involved
- less involved
- no affect
- don't know

Why? Please comment: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

11. Do you feel that being part of a multi-operator farm has any bearing on your involvement in off-farm employment?

- more involved
- less involved
- no affect
- don't know

Why? Please comment: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

12. Do you feel that being part of a multi-operator farm affects the amount of interaction/involvement you have with neighbour farm families not in the group?

- more interaction/involvement
- less interaction/involvement
- no affect
- don't know

Why? Please comment: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

13. Do you feel that neighbours treat this farm or any of it's participants differently because this is a group operation? Yes      No      D.K.     

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

14. Which of the following best describes your role in decision-making in respect to the home/household:

- My opinion is neither sought nor considered on such decisions.
- I am consulted but my opinion is not as important as that of others.
- My opinion is of equal weight to that of others.
- I often have the last word given my experience, ownership, etc.

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

15. Which of the following best describes your relationship to your spouse in respect to community and farm organizations, political activities:

- I tend to follow my husband's lead on affiliations, voting, etc.
- We make decisions jointly and tend to agree on such issues.
- We discuss such things but decide on our own positions/activities.
- We rarely discuss such things/have our own opinions, affiliations, etc.

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

16. Which of the following best describes your role in decision-making in respect to farm practices and crop plans:

- My opinion is neither sought nor considered on such decisions.
- I am consulted but my opinion is not as important as that of others.
- My opinion is of equal weight to that of others.
- I often have the last word given my experience, ownership, etc.
- I am consulted by my spouse but have no say in regards to others who are a part of this operation.

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

17. Which of the following best describes your role in decision-making in respect land purchases, leasing, or sales:

- My opinion is neither sought nor considered on such decisions.
- I am consulted but my opinion is not as important as that of others.
- My opinion is of equal weight to that of others.
- I often have the last word given my experience, ownership, etc.
- I am consulted by my spouse but have no say in regards to others who are a part of this operation.

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

18. Which of the following best describes your role in decision-making in respect to machinery or equipment purchases:

- My opinion is neither sought nor considered on such decisions.
- I am consulted but my opinion is not as important as that of others.
- My opinion is of equal weight to that of others.
- I often have the last word given my experience, ownership, etc.
- I am consulted by my spouse but have no say in regards to others who are a part of this operation.

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

19. Which of the following best describes your role in decision-making in respect to farm finances, loans, etc.:

- My opinion is neither sought nor considered on such decisions.
- I am consulted but my opinion is not as important as that of others.
- My opinion is of equal weight to that of others.
- I often have the last word given my experience, ownership, etc.
- I am consulted by my spouse but have no say in regards to others who are a part of this operation.

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

20. Which of the following best describes your role in decision-making in respect to retirement, intergenerational transfers, or exiting from farming:

- My opinion is neither sought nor considered on such decisions.
- I am consulted but my opinion is not as important as that of others.
- My opinion is of equal weight to that of others.
- I often have the last word given my ownership, experience, etc.
- I am consulted by my spouse but have no say in regards to others who are a part of this operation.

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

21. Overall, how would you describe your involvement/influence in decision-making in respect to the group farm operation?

- Minimal
- Slightly more than minimal
- Fairly substantial
- Substantial
- Very substantial

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

22. Which of the following best describes how you and your spouse feel about staying in farming?

- We would both be willing to exit from farming given the opportunity.
- He would be willing to leave but I am more adamant about staying.
- I would be willing to leave but he is more adamant about staying.
- We both feel adamant about trying to stay on the farm.

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

23. Is maintaining and transferring this farm operation to the next generation an important consideration for you personally?

Yes  No

24. Would you encourage your daughter(s) to enter into farming? Yes  NO

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

25. Would you encourage your son(s) to enter into farming?

Yes  No  Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

26. Where do you plan/expect to retire (on the farm, local community, elsewhere)? \_\_\_\_\_

26a. Please comment on the reasons for your answer: \_\_\_\_\_

27. How has your role in this farm operation changed over the last 5 years?  
\_\_\_\_\_

28. What changes---including changes in your own role--do you expect in the next 5 years? \_\_\_\_\_

III. WORK ON AND OFF THE FARM

1. Household work

1. Please indicate who normally takes responsibility for the household tasks listed below. In cases where more than one person is checked, circle the one who takes the primary responsibility.

Other	Self	Spouse	Children	Paid Worker	Other Relatives
Preparing meals					
Cleaning dishes/kitchen					
House cleaning					
Laundry & ironing					
Baking & preserving					
Child care					
Helping children with homework					
Transporting children					
School related activities					
Looking after sick/elderly family/friends					
Visiting sick/elderly family/friends					
Shopping					
House repair/maintenance					
Minor car maintenance					
Bills/banking					
Growing a garden					
Lawn, yard maintenance					

2. If you consider all the time spent on household tasks (including child care, yard work, etc.) on your farm in 1989, what percentage would you say each of the following contributes:

	Percentage
Yourself	_____
Your spouse	_____
Your children	_____
Other relatives	_____
Hired help	_____
Others	_____
Total:	100%

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

3. In 1989, were you paid for any household work that you did? (e.g. preparing meals for harvest crew)  
 Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

3b. If YES, please discuss the nature of the work done and arrangements for payment: \_\_\_\_\_

ii. On farm work

4. In addition to work around the home, please indicate whether in 1989 you did the following kinds of farm work frequently, occasionally, or not at all.

	Frequently	Occasionally	Seldom	Not at all
Drive equipment/trucks	'	'	'	'
Repair equipment/buildings	'	'	'	'
Feed or care of livestock/poultry	'	'	'	'
Take meals to the field	'	'	'	'
Delivering supplies or parts	'	'	'	'
Grain/livestock loading/transport	'	'	'	'
Ordering supplies/parts/services	'	'	'	'
Planning/managing farm operations	'	'	'	'
Bookkeeping/paper work	'	'	'	'
Other, specify	'	'	'	'

5. Please discuss the work other women who are part of the group operation do on the group farm: \_\_\_\_\_

6. In 1989, approximately how many weeks (week = 40hrs) did you work on:  
 Group farm acreage: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Acreage not part of group operation: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

7. How would you describe your work on the group farm (check more than one if necessary)?  
 Self employed work  
 Unpaid work  
 Paid farm work (ASK Q.7a)

7a. In what year did you start being paid? 19\_\_

7b. Why did you start being paid in that year? \_\_\_\_\_

7c. What is your gross monthly rate of pay?  
 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

8. How would you describe your work on acreage not part of the group farm operation (check more than one if necessary)?  
 Self employed work  
 Unpaid work  
 Paid farm work (ASK Q.8a)

8a. In what year did you start being paid?  
 19\_\_

8b. Why did you start being paid in that year? \_\_\_\_\_

8c. What is your gross monthly rate of pay?  
 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

9. What forms of direct financial interest do you have in this farm operation?

- Some land in my name only.
- Some land held jointly with husband.
- Some land held jointly with other relative(s).
- Partner in a formal partnership.
- Shareholder in farm corporation.
- Shareholder in farming cooperative.
- Own or have joint ownership of some livestock
- Own or have joint ownership of farm machinery, equipment, vehicles.
- Have co-signed loans or have loans or mortgage in own name.
- Other, specify: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Did you receive a share of the farm income in 1989 in any of the following forms?

- Receive rent on land owned.
- Receive crop share based on land owned.
- Receive income from livestock owned individually or jointly.
- Receive share of income based land owned
- Other, specify: \_\_\_\_\_

iii. Off farm work

11. In 1989, did you have an off-farm job (not counting voluntary work)?

Yes  No  (skip to Q.21)

12. What kind of work did you do? (where there was more than one job, please indicate which was your main job) \_\_\_\_\_

13. In this occupation were you:

- Working for wages
- Self employed without hired help
- Self employed with hired help
- Other, \_\_\_\_\_

14. How many years have you worked at this job?  
\_\_\_\_\_

15. In 1989, how many weeks did you work?  
\_\_\_\_\_

16. In 1989, would you say your gross income from off-farm work was above or below \$20,000:

above  below

Would it be in the range of:

- 0-5                       20-30
- 5-10                      30-40
- 10-20                    40+

17. How many miles did you travel between your home and job(s) per day (round trip)?  
\_\_\_\_\_

18. Which of the following best describes the relationship between your off-farm work and the farm operation:

- Off-farm job is a necessity to supplement farm/household income.
- Off-farm job is a job to supplement my personal/household income.
- Off-farm job is a career in which I hope to continue.
- Off-farm job is a career in which I hope to continue.
- Off-farm job provides a change from my work and activities on the farm.

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

19. Does your job provide any benefits (e.g. life insurance) that cover you, your spouse or other family members?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

If YES, please discuss the nature of the benefits and who is covered: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

20. If for some reason, you lost your job next week, do you think your chances for finding another job would be:

- \_\_\_ Good
- \_\_\_ Fair
- \_\_\_ Poor
- \_\_\_ Don't know

21. Did you do any work on another farm in 1989 (not counting the group operation and not counting housework/child care)?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ (Skip to NEXT SECTION)

22a. How would you describe your work on this other farm (check more than one if necessary)?

- \_\_\_ Self employed work
- \_\_\_ Unpaid work
- \_\_\_ Paid farm work (ASK Q.22a)

22b. What was your gross monthly rate of pay? \$ \_\_\_\_\_

22c. To whom did this other farm belong? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**IV. RESOURCE MOBILIZATION**

1. Of the total acreage farmed by this group operation, how many acres are owned by:

Acres  
You alone .....  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Your spouse alone .....  
You and your spouse jointly .....  
Your relatives .....

1a. Under what arrangement is land belonging to you farmed by this operation?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

1b. Did any other portion of the land farmed by this operation in 1989, originate in any way with women members or spouses of members?

Relationship	Arrangement	Acreage
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

2. Please discuss any role your own relatives or your spouse's relatives may have played in the assembly/provision of land used by the group operation: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Please discuss any contributions you may have made to the assembly of capital for this farm operation (include loans, cash contributions, livestock, machinery, etc.). \_\_\_\_\_

4. Have any of your relatives or your husband's relatives contributed to the assembly of capital for this farm operation, e.g. loans, loan guarantees, cash contributions, livestock, machinery? Please indicate how the individual(s) involved are related to you and discuss the nature of any contributions made.

<u>Individual</u>	<u>Relationship</u>	<u>Nature of Contribution/Arrangement</u>

5. Other than you and your spouse, did any other members of this household contribute to the household in 1989 by paying 'board', sharing utility bills, purchasing a major appliance, making cash contributions, etc. Please indicate if and how these individuals were related to you or your spouse, and the nature of their contribution(s).

<u>Individual</u>	<u>Relationship</u>	<u>Nature of Contribution</u>

6. In 1989, did any anyone outside of this household, contribute to the household in 1989 e.g. by paying utility bills, purchasing an appliance, making cash or material contributions, etc. Please indicate who these individuals were, their relationship, if any, to you or your spouse, and the nature of their contribution(s).

<u>Individual</u>	<u>Relationship</u>	<u>Nature of Contribution</u>

7. In 1989, did any members of your household contribute materially to another household e.g. providing food, supplies, cash? Please indicate the relationship, if any, to these households, and the nature of contribution(s).

<u>Individual</u>	<u>Relationship</u>	<u>Nature of Contribution</u>

V. LIVING IN THE RURAL COMMUNITY

1. Please indicate whether you have close friends who are:

- immediate neighbours (<10 Km away)
- people living in the local community/area (>10<50km)
- people living outside the community/area (>50km)

2. Do you have someone whom you consider a "best friend" in this local area/ community?

No  Yes

If YES, please indicate whether this individual is also part of the group operation, from another farm, or from a town? \_\_\_\_\_

3. How often do you visit or socialize with neighbours (<10km away)?

- frequently (at least once a week)
- occasionally (at least once a month)
- seldom (less than once a month)
- not at all

4. How often do you visit or socialize with people living the local community/area (>10<50km)?

- frequently (at least once a week)
- occasionally (at least once a month)
- seldom (less than once a month)
- not at all

5. How often do you visit or socialize with people living outside the local community/area (>50km)?

- frequently (at least once a week)
- occasionally (at least once a month)
- seldom (less than once a month)
- not at all

6. Overall, has there been any change in the last ten years in the amount of time you spend visiting or socializing with neighbours or people living in the local community/area (>50km)?

- decreased
- has not changed
- increased

6a. Please discuss any changes and reasons for them. \_\_\_\_\_

7. Considering each of the children under 16 years old who are living in your household (starting with the oldest), please indicate whether they have friends who are:

	Child					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Immediate neighbours (<10 km away) ..	3	3	3	3	3	3
People living in the local community/area (>10<50Km) .....	3	3	3	3	3	3
People living outside the community/area (>50km) .....	3	3	3	3	3	3
Not applicable _____						

8. How many kilometres do these children (<16 years) have to travel (one way) for the following (starting again with the eldest):

	Child (kms)					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
School .....	3	3	3	3	3	3
Sports activities .....	3	3	3	3	3	3
Cultural activities (e.g. music, dance) .....	3	3	3	3	3	3
Social life/recreation .....	3	3	3	3	3	3
Other activities .....	3	3	3	3	3	3
Comments: _____						

9. How many families/households in this area (<50Km) are closely related to you yourself? (Include grown children, parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, first cousins, grandparents.) \_\_\_\_\_

9a. Please indicate (using the table below): a) how each of the (adult) individuals (keeping households together) is related to you; b) their occupation(s), and, if applicable; c) how the individual has been of any importance to the survival of your farm operation or household, including whether they are actually part of this group operation.

Relationship	Occupation	Type of Assistance/Importance for Survival
3	3	3
3	3	3
3	3	3
3	3	3
3	3	3
3	3	3
3	3	3
3	3	3

10. How many families/households in this area (<50Km) are closely related to your spouse/partner? (Include grown children, parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, first cousins, grandparents.) \_\_\_\_\_

10a. Please indicate (using the table below): a) how each of the (adult) individuals (keeping households together) is related to your spouse/partner; b) their occupation(s), and, if applicable; c) how the individual has been of any importance to the survival of your farm operation or household, including whether they are actually part of this group operation.

Relationship	Occupation	Type of Assistance/Importance for Survival
3	3	3
3	3	3
3	3	3

11. What sort of things would people in this community do for each other without expecting pay? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

11a. Would any kind of return be expected?  
 Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

12. Please indicate whether, in 1988 or 1989, you received any of the following kinds of unpaid assistance/support from people in households other than your own (in the local community/area). Please indicate whether the persons involved were from household belonging to the group farm operation, from other farm households, or from non-farm households. Indicate also, whether they were related or non-related and whether they were male or female.

	Group Farm		Other Farm		Non-Farm	
	Rel	Non	Rel	Non	Rel	Non
Friendship/Emotional support	0	3	0	3	0	3
Personal advice	0	3	0	3	0	3
Child care	0	3	0	3	0	3
Driving Childr en	0	3	0	3	0	3
Care of sick/elderly, etc.	0	3	0	3	0	3
Household advice	0	3	0	3	0	3
Household/farm errands	0	3	0	3	0	3
Housework	0	3	0	3	0	3
House repair/maintenance	0	3	0	3	0	3
House sitting/watching	0	3	0	3	0	3
Gardening, yard work	0	3	0	3	0	3
Car maintenance	0	3	0	3	0	3
Financial advice/assistance	0	3	0	3	0	3
Help with minor emergencies	0	3	0	3	0	3
Help with major crises/transitions	0	3	0	3	0	3
Gifts of money	0	3	0	3	0	3
Other (specify)	0	3	0	3	0	3
Other (specify)	0	3	0	3	0	3

12a. Please discuss the items identified above and who was involved: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

13. Please indicate whether, in 1988 or 1989, you yourself gave any of the following kinds of unpaid assistance/support to people in households other than your own (in the local community/area). Please indicate whether the persons involved were from household belonging to the group farm operation, from other farm households, or from non-farm households. Indicate also, whether they were related or non-related and whether they were male or female.

	Group Farm		Other Farm		Non-Farm	
	Rel	Non	Rel	Non	Rel	Non
Friendship/Emotional support	0	3	0	3	0	3
Personal advice	0	3	0	3	0	3
Child care	0	3	0	3	0	3
Driving Children	0	3	0	3	0	3
Care of sick/elderly, etc.	0	3	0	3	0	3
Household advice	0	3	0	3	0	3
Household/farm errands	0	3	0	3	0	3
Housework	0	3	0	3	0	3

House repair/maintenance	o	3	o	3	o	3
House sitting/watching	o	3	o	3	o	3
Gardening, yard work	o	3	o	3	o	3
Car maintenance	o	3	o	3	o	3
Financial advice/assistance	o	3	o	3	o	3
Help with minor emergencies	o	3	o	3	o	3
Help with major crises/transitions	o	3	o	3	o	3
Gifts of money	o	3	o	3	o	3
Other (specify)	o	3	o	3	o	3
Other (specify)	o	3	o	3	o	3

13a. Please discuss the items identified above and who was involved: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

14. Please identify the organizations (farm, community, women's) to which you belonged in 1989 and any executive position(s) held.

Organization	Executive position
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

15. Please discuss any ways in which your involvement in these organizations has benefited you, your household, or the farm operation?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

16. Last month, how many times did you...	No. of times
Visit friends or relatives in your home or theirs? ....	_____
Go out to a restaurant/cafe .....	_____
Go to a pub or cocktail lounge .....	_____
Attend a church service/event .....	_____
Watch any sport event in person .....	_____
Participate in any personal fitness/sports activity yourself .	_____
Go to a movie, live show, concert or theatre .....	_____
Participate in any kind of voluntary activity .....	_____

What kinds of recreational activities does your family participate in together? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

17. Compared to a five years ago, would you say you spend more time, less time, or about the same amount of time away from your community/local area, for the activities listed below?

Activities	Time Spent Away From Community		
	More(1)	Same(2)	Less(3)
Minor shopping trips.	3		3
Major shopping trips	3		3
Social and recreational activities	3		3
Short 1-day holidays	3		3
Major holidays	3		3
Comments:	_____		

19. Where do you do most of your major shopping? Please discuss: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

20. Please discuss what you like most about living in this rural community-  
-and what you like least? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

21. Would you say that the local community "works" for you?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Please discuss: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

22. All things considered, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with this community/area as a place to live? (on a scale of 1 to 10, choose and circle the appropriate number.)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Completely dissatisfied		Somewhat dissatisfied		Somewhat satisfied				Completely satisfied	

23. What changes do you foresee in this community over the next 5-10 years?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

24. Please describe the geographic area that you consider to be included in your "local community". Give the names of any towns or villages and the distances from your farm to these places and/or to the borders of the area you include as part of your community. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

VI. FARMING IN SASKATCHEWAN

1. What do you think are the most important problems facing Saskatchewan farm families these days? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

2. Farm women's organizations have raised several concerns about the position of women in agriculture. Please indicate whether you think each of the following items is very important, somewhat important or not at all important.

	Very Impt.	Some-what	Not at all	Don't know
The contribution of farm women should be recognized by setting up written partnerships, etc. for farms.	1	2	3	9
Agricultural courses and seminars should welcome and be relevant to farm women	1	2	3	9
Daycare should be available in rural areas	1	2	3	9
Should be increased participation of women in farm organizations (as members <u>and</u> in leadership positions)	1	2	3	9
Services should be available for abused women	1	2	3	9
Counselling services/support groups should be available for rural women	1	2	3	9

3. Generally, what do you think of the position of women in farming?  
 \_\_\_\_\_

4. Has being part of a group farm affected your views on the role of women in farming? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

5. What changes do you foresee in the organization of family farm operations e.g sharing arrangements, partnerships, corporations, machinery cooperatives? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

6. This is the end. Thank you for you time and effort. Do you have any other comments or points you would like to add; or any comments on the questionnaire (length, interest, things missing)? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \* \* \* \* \*

INTERVIEWER COMMENTS:

How did the interview go overall? (Discuss problems, ideas for improvements):

---

Brief description of respondent, home, yard, farm, etc.):

---

APPENDIX A.2

FARM WOMEN NETWORK QUESTIONNAIRE - INDIVIDUAL OPERATOR FARM

This questionnaire is designed to collect information about the this farm and your role in it. There are sections which deal with the operation of the farm in 1989 and other sections which ask about the people involved, their connections to each other, and relations with people in the local community. We will need to move through the questionnaire fairly quickly in order to complete it in reasonable time but we also want you to feel free to add comments where you think appropriate and to ask for clarification if questions seem unclear. While we are interested in your answers to all questions, you are of course free not to answer specific items or to end the interview at any time.

The interview will be treated as confidential. Only members of this research team will have access to completed questionnaires. No information pertaining to individuals or individual farm units will be revealed in study reports. Where excerpts from conversations are used, attribution will be handled in such a way as to preserve anonymity. If you have any questions or further thoughts about this survey, please feel free to contact us at the phone number and address provided.

Start Time: \_\_\_\_\_ End Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Respondent: \_\_\_\_\_

Farm Type: \_\_\_\_\_

Farm Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

I. PERSONAL HISTORY AND EXPERIENCE

1. Where did you grow up? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Was this...

\_\_\_ on a farm

\_\_\_ in a rural centre

\_\_\_ in an urban community

\_\_\_ both urban and rural

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Could you tell me how old you were on your last birthday?

\_\_\_ 18-25

\_\_\_ 36-45

\_\_\_ 66 or older

\_\_\_ 26-35

\_\_\_ 46-65

4. What grade did you complete in elementary and/or high school? Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Have you taken any post secondary education at an institute or university?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

5a. If YES, what level did you complete?

\_\_\_ some technical (no cert/diploma)

\_\_\_ complete technical

\_\_\_ some University (no cert/ degree)

\_\_\_ University certificate

\_\_\_ Ba/BSc.

\_\_\_ MA/MSc.

\_\_\_ Ph.D.

6. Have you ever taken any courses in any of the following areas?

- farm machinery operation or repair
- motor vehicle mechanics
- home economics
- farm accounts management
- other farm management
- field and animal husbandry
- a computer course
- other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

7. Please discuss any plans you may have to continue your education.

Include any courses you are now taking. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. What is your ethnic or cultural background on your mother's side of the family? \_\_\_\_\_

9. What is your ethnic or cultural background on your father's side of the family? \_\_\_\_\_

10. What is your religious preference? \_\_\_\_\_

11. How many adult persons (16 years or older) regularly live in your household?

No. of persons: \_\_\_\_\_

12. Can you tell me the names of all the women ( $\geq 16$ ) and their relationship to you?

Name	Relationship
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

13. Can you tell me the names of all the men ( $\geq 16$ ) and their relationship to you?

Name	Relationship
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

14. What is the total number of children under 16 years of age living in your household?  
\_\_\_\_\_

15. Starting with the oldest child- give their age, sex and relationship to you?

Name	Age	Sex	Relationship

16. Do you have children who no longer live at home with you?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

16a. If YES, please give the age and sex of the person and their involvement, if any, with the farm:

Age	Sex	Involvement with the Farm

17. What year did you become involved in this farm operation? 19\_\_\_

18. Please describe the circumstances under which you came to be involved in this farm operation. Include your own previous farm experience and the year you became involved in this operation. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

19. Including you, how many generations of your family have worked on this farm?  
\_\_\_\_\_

20. Including your spouse, how many generations of his family have worked on this farm?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**II. HOME AND FARM LIFE**

1. I'd like to ask you about your current home. Is it owned by someone living in your household?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

1a. If YES, by whom? \_\_\_\_\_

1b. If NO, who owns it? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What kinds of work do children (under the age of 16) do on this farm?
- none
  - yard work and maintenance
  - field work
  - work with livestock
  - work on other farms
  - non-farm work for others
  - other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

3. What kinds of work do young people (16-21 years of age) do on this farm?
- none
  - yard work and maintenance
  - field work
  - work with livestock
  - work on other farms
  - non-farm work for others
  - other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Which of the following best describes your role in decision-making in respect to the home/household:
- My opinion is neither sought nor considered on such decisions.
  - I am consulted but my opinion is not as important as that of others.
  - My opinion is of equal weight to that of others.
  - I often have the last word given my experience, ownership, etc.
- Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Which of the following best describes your relationship to your spouse in respect to community and farm organizations, political activities:
- I tend to follow my husband's lead on affiliations, voting, etc.
  - We make decisions jointly and tend to agree on such issues.
  - We discuss such things but decide on our own positions/activities.
  - We rarely discuss such things/have our own opinions, affiliations, etc.
- Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Which of the following best describes your role in decision-making in respect to farm practices and crop plans:
- My opinion is neither sought nor considered on such decisions.
  - I am consulted but my opinion is not as important as that of others.
  - My opinion is of equal weight to that of others.
  - I often have the last word given my experience, ownership, etc.
- Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Which of the following best describes your role in decision-making in respect to land purchases, leasing, or sales:
- My opinion is neither sought nor considered on such decisions.
  - I am consulted but my opinion is not as important as that of others.
  - My opinion is of equal weight to that of others.
  - I often have the last word given my experience, ownership, etc.
- Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Which of the following best describes your role in decision-making in respect to machinery or equipment purchases:
- My opinion is neither sought nor considered on such decisions.
  - I am consulted but my opinion is not as important as that of others.
  - My opinion is of equal weight to that of others.
  - I often have the last word given my experience, ownership, etc.
- Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Which of the following best describes your role in decision-making in respect to farm finances, loans, etc.:

- My opinion is neither sought nor considered on such decisions.
- I am consulted but my opinion is not as important as that of others.
- My opinion is of equal weight to that of others.
- I often have the last word given my experience, ownership, etc.

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Which of the following best describes your role in decision-making in respect to retirement, intergenerational transfers, or exiting from farming:

- My opinion is neither sought nor considered on such decisions.
- I am consulted but my opinion is not as important as that of others.
- My opinion is of equal weight to that of others.
- I often have the last word given my experience, ownership, etc.

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

11. Which of the following best describes how you and your spouse feel about staying in farming?

- We would both be willing to exit from farming given the opportunity.
- He would be willing to leave but I am more adamant about staying.
- I would be willing to leave but he is more adamant about staying.
- We both feel adamant about trying to stay on the farm.

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

12. Is maintaining and transferring this farm operation to the next generation an important consideration for you personally?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Would you encourage your daughter(s) to enter into farming? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

13. Would you encourage your son(s) to enter into farming?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

14. Where do you plan/expect to retire (on the farm, local community, elsewhere)? \_\_\_\_\_

14a. Please comment on the reasons for your answer: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

15. How has your role in this farm operation changed over the last 5 years?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

16. What changes--including changes in your own role--do you expect in the next 5 years? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

II. WORK ON AND OFF THE FARM

1. Household work

1. Please indicate who normally takes responsibility for the household tasks listed below. In cases where more than one person is checked circle who takes the primary responsibility.

	'Self	'Spouse	'Children	'Paid 'Worker	'Other 'Relatives	'Other
Preparing meals						
Cleaning dishes/kitchen						
House cleaning						
Laundry & ironing						
Baking & preserving						
Child care						
Helping children with homework						
Children to sports, etc						
School related activities						
Looking after sick/elderly family/friends						
Visiting sick/elderly family/friends						
Shopping						
House repair/maintenance						
Minor car maintenance						
Bills/banking						
Growing a garden						
Lawn, yard maintenance						

2. If you consider all the time spent on household tasks (including child care, yard work, etc.) on your farm in 1989, what percentage would you say each of the following contributes:

	Percentage
Yourself	_____
Your spouse	_____
Your children	_____
Other relatives	_____
Hired help	_____
Others	_____
Total:	100%
Comments:	_____

3. In 1989, were you paid for any household work that you did? (e.g. preparing meals for harvest crew)  
 Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

3b. If YES, please discuss the nature of the work done and arrangements for payment: \_\_\_\_\_

ii. On farm work

4. In addition to work around the home, please indicate whether in 1989 you did the following kinds of farm work frequently, occasionally, or not at all.

	Frequently	Occasionally	Seldom	Not at all
Drive equipment/trucks	'	'	'	'
Repair equipment/buildings	'	'	'	'
Feed or care of livestock/poultry	'	'	'	'
Take meals to the field	'	'	'	'
Delivering supplies or parts	'	'	'	'
Grain/livestock loading/transport	'	'	'	'
Ordering supplies/parts/services	'	'	'	'
Planning/managing farm operations	'	'	'	'
Bookkeeping/paper work	'	'	'	'
Other, specify	'	'	'	'

5. Approximately how many weeks (week = 40hrs) did you work (on the farm) in 1989?

No. of Weeks: \_\_\_\_\_

6. How would you describe your farm work (check more than one if necessary)?

- Self employed work  
 Unpaid work  
 Paid farm work (ASK Q.6a)

6a. In what year did you start being paid?  
19\_\_\_\_

6b. Why did you start being paid in that year? \_\_\_\_\_

6c. What is your gross monthly rate of pay? \$ \_\_\_\_\_

7. What forms of direct financial interest do you have in this farm operation? \_\_\_\_\_ Some land in my name only.

- Some land held jointly with husband.  
 Some land held jointly with other relative(s).  
 Partner in a formal partnership.  
 Shareholder in farm corporation.  
 Own or have joint ownership of some livestock  
 Own or have joint ownership of farm machinery, equipment, vehicles.  
 Have co-signed loans or have loans or mortgage in own name.  
 Other, specify: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Did you receive a share of the farm income in 1989 in any of the following forms?

- Receive rent on land owned.  
 Receive crop share based on land owned.  
 Receive percentage of income from land owned individually or jointly  
 Receive income from livestock owned individually or jointly.  
 Receive share of income based land owned  
 Other, specify: \_\_\_\_\_

iii. Off farm work

9. In 1989, did you do any work off the farm (not counting voluntary work)?  
Yes  No  (skip to Q.19)

10. What kind of work did you do? (where there was more than one job,  
please indicate which was your main job) \_\_\_\_\_

11. In this occupation were you:  
 Working for wages  
 Self employed without hired help  
 Self employed with hired help  
 Other, \_\_\_\_\_

12. How many years have you worked at this job?  
\_\_\_\_\_

13. In 1989, how many weeks did you work?  
\_\_\_\_\_

14. In 1989, would you say your gross income from off-farm work was above  
or below \$20,000:

above  below   
Would it be in the range of:

0-5             20-30  
 5-10            30-40  
 10-20           40+

15. How many miles did you travel between your home and job(s)  
per day (round trip)?  
\_\_\_\_\_

16. Which of the following best describes the relationship between your  
off-farm work and the farm operation:

- Off-farm job is a necessity to supplement farm/household income.  
 Off-farm job is just a job to supplement my personal income.  
 Off-farm job is a career in which I hope to continue.  
 Off-farm job provides a change from my work and activities on the  
farm.

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

17. Does your job provide any benefits (e.g. life insurance) that cover  
you, your spouse or other family members?

Yes  No

If YES, please discuss the nature of the benefits and who is covered: \_\_\_\_\_

18. If for some reason, you lost your job next week, do you think your  
chances for finding another job would be:  
Good  Fair  Poor  Don't know

19. Did you do any work on another farm in 1989 (not counting  
housework/child care)?

Yes  No  (Skip to NEXT SECTION)

19a. How would you describe your work on this other farm (check more than  
one if necessary)?

- Self employed work  
 Unpaid work  
 Paid farm work (ASK Q.19a)

19b. What was your gross monthly rate of pay? \$ \_\_\_\_\_

19c. To whom did this other farm belong? \_\_\_\_\_

**III. RESOURCE MOBILIZATION**

1. Of the total acreage farmed by this operation, how many acres are owned by:

Acres

You alone ..... \_\_\_\_\_

Your spouse alone ..... \_\_\_\_\_

You and your spouse jointly ..... \_\_\_\_\_

Your relatives ..... \_\_\_\_\_

1a. Under what arrangement is land belonging to you farmed by this operation?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

1b. Did any other portion of the land farmed by this operation in 1989, originate in any way with women participants or spouses of participants active in this operation?

<u>Relationship</u>	<u>Arrangement</u>	<u>Acreage</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Please discuss any role your own relatives or your spouse's relatives may have played in the assembly/provision of land used by this operation: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Please discuss any contributions you may have made to the assembly of capital for this farm operation (include loans, cash contributions, livestock, machinery, etc.). \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Have any of your relatives or your husband's relatives contributed to the assembly of capital for this farm operation, e.g. loans, loan guarantees, cash contributions, livestock, machinery? Please indicate how the individual(s) involved are related to you and discuss the nature of any contributions made.

<u>Individual</u>	<u>Relationship</u>	<u>Nature of Contribution/Arrangement</u>

5. Other than you and your spouse, did any other members of this household contribute to the household in 1989 by paying 'board', sharing utility bills, purchasing a major appliance, making cash contributions, etc. Please indicate if and how these individuals were related to you or your spouse, and the nature of their contribution(s).

<u>Individual</u>	<u>Relationship</u>	<u>Nature of Contribution</u>

6. In 1989, did any anyone outside of this household, contribute to the household in 1989 e.g. by paying utility bills, purchasing an appliance, making cash or material contributions, etc. Please indicate who these individuals were, their relationship, if any, to you or your spouse, and the nature of their contribution(s).

<u>Individual</u>	<u>Relationship</u>	<u>Nature of Contribution</u>

7. In 1989, did any members of your household contribute materially to another household e.g. providing food, supplies, cash? Please indicate the relationship, if any, to these households, and the nature of contribution(s).

<u>Individual</u>	<u>Relationship</u>	<u>Nature of Contribution</u>

#### V. LIVING IN THE RURAL COMMUNITY

1. Please indicate whether you have close friends who are:  
 \_\_\_ immediate neighbours (<10 Km away)  
 \_\_\_ people living in the local community/area (>10<50Km)  
 \_\_\_ people living outside the community/area (>50km)

2. Do you have someone whom you consider a "best friend" in this local area/community?  
 No \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_

If YES, please indicate whether this individual is from another farm, or from a town? \_\_\_\_\_

3. How often do you visit or socialize with neighbours (<10km away)?  
 \_\_\_ frequently (at least once a week)  
 \_\_\_ occasionally (at least once a month)  
 \_\_\_ seldom (less than once a month)  
 \_\_\_ not at all

4. How often do you visit or socialize with people living the local community/area (>10<50km)?  
 \_\_\_ frequently (at least once a week)  
 \_\_\_ occasionally (at least once a month)  
 \_\_\_ seldom (less than once a month)  
 \_\_\_ not at all

5. How often do you visit or socialize with people living outside the local community/area (>50km)?  
 \_\_\_ frequently (at least once a week)  
 \_\_\_ occasionally (at least once a month)  
 \_\_\_ seldom (less than once a month)  
 \_\_\_ not at all

6. Overall, has there been any change in the last ten years in the amount of time you spend visiting or socializing with neighbours or people living in the local community/area (>50km)?  
 \_\_\_ decreased  
 \_\_\_ has not changed  
 \_\_\_ increased

6a. Please discuss any changes and reasons for them. \_\_\_\_\_

7. Considering each of the children under 16 years old who are living in your household (starting with the oldest), please indicate whether they have friends who are:

	Child					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Immediate neighbours (<10 km away) ..	3	3	3	3	3	3
People living in the local community/area (>10<50km) .....	3	3	3	3	3	3
People living outside the community/area (>50km) .....	3	3	3	3	3	3
Not applicable _____						

8. How many kilometres do these children (<16 years) have to travel (one way) for the following (starting again with the eldest):

	Child (kms)					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
School .....	3	3	3	3	3	3
Sports activities .....	3	3	3	3	3	3
Cultural activities (e.g. music, dance) .....	3	3	3	3	3	3
Social life/recreation .....	3	3	3	3	3	3
Other activities .....	3	3	3	3	3	3

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

9. How many families/households in this area (<50Km) are closely related to you yourself? (Include grown children, parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, first cousins, grandparents.)

\_\_\_\_\_

9a. Please indicate (using the table below): a) how each of the (adult) individuals (keeping households together) is related to you; b) their occupation(s), and, if applicable; c) how the individual has been of any importance to the survival of your farm operation or household.

<u>Relationship</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Type of Assistance/Importance for Survival</u>
,	,	
,	,	
,	,	
,	,	
,	,	
,	,	
,	,	

10. How many families/households in this area (<50Km) are closely related to your spouse/partner? (Include grown children, parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, first cousins, grandparents.)

\_\_\_\_\_

10a. Please indicate (using the table below): a) how each of the (adult) individuals (keeping households together) is related to your spouse/partner; b) their occupation(s), and, if applicable; c) how the individual has been of any importance to the survival of your farm operation or household.

<u>Relationship</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Type of Assistance/Importance for Survival</u>
,	,	
,	,	
,	,	
,	,	

11. What sort of things would people in this community do for each other without expecting pay? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

11a. Would any kind of return be expected?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

12. Please indicate whether, in 1988 or 1989, you received any of the following kinds of unpaid assistance/support from people in households other than your own (in the local community/area). Please indicate whether the persons involved were, farm or non-farm, relatives or non-relatives, male or female.

	° Other Farm		° Non-Farm		°
	° Rel	° Non	° Rel	° Non	
Friendship/Emotional support	°	°	°	°	°
Personal advice	°	°	°	°	°
Child care	°	°	°	°	°
Driving Children	°	°	°	°	°
Care of sick/elderly, etc.	°	°	°	°	°
Household advice	°	°	°	°	°
Household/farm errands	°	°	°	°	°
Housework	°	°	°	°	°
House repair/maintenance	°	°	°	°	°
House sitting/watching	°	°	°	°	°
Gardening, yard work	°	°	°	°	°
Car maintenance	°	°	°	°	°
Financial advice/assistance	°	°	°	°	°
Help with minor emergencies	°	°	°	°	°
Help with major crises/transitions	°	°	°	°	°
Gifts of money	°	°	°	°	°
Other (specify)	°	°	°	°	°
Other (specify)	°	°	°	°	°

12a. Please discuss the items identified above and who was involved: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

13. Please indicate whether, in 1988 or 1989, you yourself gave any of the following kinds of unpaid assistance/support to people in households other than your own (in the local community/area). Please indicate whether the persons involved were, farm or non-farm, relatives or non-relatives, male or female.

	° Other Farm		° Non-Farm		°
	° Rel	° Non	° Rel	° Non	
Friendship/Emotional support	°	°	°	°	°
Personal advice	°	°	°	°	°
Child care	°	°	°	°	°
Driving Children	°	°	°	°	°
Care of sick/elderly, etc.	°	°	°	°	°
Household advice	°	°	°	°	°
Household/farm errands	°	°	°	°	°
Housework	°	°	°	°	°
House repair/maintenance	°	°	°	°	°
House sitting/watching	°	°	°	°	°
Gardening, yard work	°	°	°	°	°
Car maintenance	°	°	°	°	°

<u>Financial advice/assistance</u>	°	3	°	3	°
<u>Help with minor emergencies</u>	°	3	°	3	°
<u>Help with major crises/transitions</u>	°	3	°	3	°
<u>Gifts of money</u>	°	3	°	3	°
<u>Other (specify)</u>	°	3	°	3	°
<u>Other (specify)</u>	°	3	°	3	°

13a. Please discuss the items identified above and who was involved: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

14. Please identify the organizations (farm, community, women's) to which you belonged in 1989 and any executive position(s) held.

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Executive position</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

15. Please discuss any ways in which your involvement in these organizations has benefited you, your household, or the farm operation?

\_\_\_\_\_

	<u>No. of times</u>
16. Last month, how many times did you... Visit friends or relatives in your home or theirs? ....	_____
Go out to a restaurant/cafe .....	_____
Go to a pub or cocktail lounge .....	_____
Attend a church service/event .....	_____
Watch any sport event in person .....	_____
Participate in any personal fitness/sports activity yourself .	_____
Go to a movie, live show, concert or theatre .....	_____
Participate in any kind of voluntary activity .....	_____

17. What kinds of recreational activities does your family participate in together? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

18. Compared to a five years ago, would you say you spend more time, less time, or about the same amount of time away from your community/local area, for the activities listed below?

Activities	Time Spent Away From Community		
	More (1)	Same (2)	Less (3)
Minor shopping trips	3		3
Major shopping trips	3		3
Social and recreational activities	3		3
Short 1-day holidays	3		3
Major holidays	3		3
Comments:	_____		

19. Where do you do most of your major shopping? Please discuss: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

20. Please discuss what you like most about living in this rural community--and what you like least? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

21. Would you say that the local community "works" for you?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Please discuss: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

22. All things considered, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with this community/area as a place to live? (on a scale of 1 to 10, choose and circle the appropriate number.)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Completely dissatisfied		Somewhat dissatisfied		Somewhat satisfied				Completely satisfied	

23. What changes do you foresee in this community over the next 5-10 years?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

24. Please describe the geographic area that you consider to be included in your "local community". Give the names of any towns or villages and the distances from your farm to these places and/or to the borders of the area you include as part of your community. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## VI. FARMING IN SASKATCHEWAN

1. What do you think are the most important problems facing Saskatchewan farm families these days? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Farm women's organizations have raised several concerns about the position of women in agriculture. Please indicate whether you think each of the following items is very important, somewhat important or not at all important.

	Very Impt.	Some-what	Not at all	Don't know
The contribution of farm women should be recognized by setting up written partnerships, etc. for farms.	1	2	3	9
Agricultural courses and seminars should welcome and be relevant to farm women	1	2	3	9
Daycare should be available in rural areas	1	2	3	9
Should be increased participation of women in farm organizations (as members <u>and</u> in leadership positions)	1	2	3	9
Services should be available for abused women	1	2	3	9
Counselling services/support groups should be available for rural women	1	2	3	9

3. Generally, what do you think of the position of women in farming? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What changes do you foresee in the organization of family farm operations e.g sharing arrangements, partnerships, corporations, machinery cooperatives? \_\_\_\_\_

5. This is the end. Thank you for you time and effort. Do you have any other comments or points you would like to add; or any comments on the questionnaire (length, interest, things missing)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\* \* \* \* \*

INTERVIEWER COMMENTS:

How did the interview go overall? (Discuss problems, ideas for improvements):

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---

Brief description of respondent, home, yard, farm, etc.):

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