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ABSTRACT

Five papers deal with special problems of vocational education for women and girls in rural and nonmetropolitan school districts. An introductory paper puts vocational education for women into a historical perspective, addresses current status of rural women, and depicts them four years after enactment of the most recent vocational education amendments which first included sex equity as a goal. The second paper focuses on self-employed women and female entrepreneurship development. It provides a statistical perspective on nonmetropolitan women in the labor market and detailed information on women-owned firms in New England. The third paper describes the different roles that farmwomen play in farming operations. Present employment of rural women who have left the farm is also considered. The fourth paper draws on interviews in rural Vermont and New Hampshire schools to discuss factors affecting women's enrollment in nontraditional programs and their job opportunities. The fifth paper outlines several major pieces of federal legislation that could be used to increase vocational education opportunities for rural women and girls. Specific goals or objectives to increase women's opportunities are then identified, and federal legislative and policy options for reaching these goals effectively are suggested. (YLB)

Brake Shoes, Backhoes, & Balance Sheets
The Changing Vocational Education of Rural Women

Edited by

Stuart Rosenfeld

Authors

Margaret Dunkle
Faith Dunne
Frances Hill
Stuart Rosenfeld
Ptarmigan Teal

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Rural American Women, Inc. (RAW) is a national, nonprofit organization founded in 1977 to bring visability and recognition to the achievements and concerns of rural women. RAW is committed to rural community development with an emphasis on the role of women in this development process.

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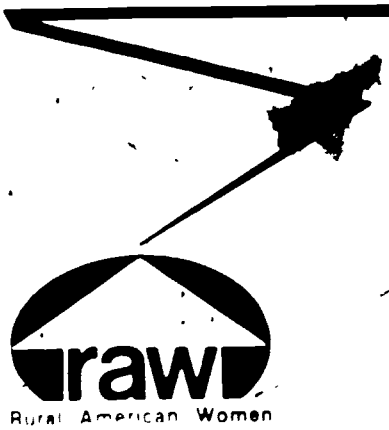

Preface

Rural American Women is pleased to give recognition to the important contribution made by the authors of this publication. It will benefit rural women, educators and policy makers who are working toward the improvement of vocational education for rural women.

This publication highlights the regional differences brought about by culture, topography, government policy, sexist attitudes, and job markets. It is an excellent tool for motivating local people toward involvement and sensitizing more distant policy makers to the need for local adaptation of policies and educational material.

Rural American Women's purpose is to bring recognition and visibility to the problems and achievements of rural women and to assist them in improving the economic, social, cultural and political conditions in their local communities. Co-sponsorship of this publication allows Rural American Women the opportunity to introduce our organization to you who are interested in the changing role of rural women. We hope policy makers, educators, and citizens will read this report with care. The hidden realities of rural American society are not meaningless to the health of this nation and it will take people with wisdom and foresight to share with us in the effort to bring forth that vital though hidden undergirding of American society.

Jane Threatt
Co-Director

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RURAL AMERICAN WOMEN

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Foreword

The dominant theme in federal education policy today is equity. Through increased lobbying strength and political savvy, special interest groups have both influenced and been influenced by current education policies. Under the assumption that equal economic opportunities are related to equal education opportunities, this policy emphasis on equity has been extended to all whose educational, and thus economic, opportunities have been restrained either intentionally or unintentionally. First minorities and disadvantaged populations, and then the handicapped and women, and more recently the limited English proficient, have been the targets of most federal education programs. One unintended result of current education policy has been to focus attention on the cities, where the number of those with special educational needs is greatest, where advocates are best organized, and where the problems are most visible.

At the same time there has been a renewed interest in rural and small community life. The migration of people and business into rural areas plus the impact of "small is beautiful" on America have contributed to federal interest in rural matters. Consequently, education policy analysts have rediscovered the rural school -- its strengths, as well as its problems -- and economists have "discovered" its relationship to economic development.

Thus, when the Congress charged the National Institute of Education (NIE) with studying vocational education to provide information for the next reauthorization, it seemed appropriate to include not only the general effects of the Vocational Educational Act on special populations but also the effects specifically in rural areas. The NIE undertook a comprehensive study of vocational education in rural and sparsely populated areas, combining information gleaned from the mandated study, but supplemented by commissioned papers and small-scale independent studies by people particularly knowledgeable about rural conditions.

Four of the commissioned papers treated the subject of the one special group identified in the current law with needs in every rural area -- women. It assumed that women and girls in rural and nonmetro

school districts are faced with special problems for a number of reasons related to rural features and characteristics, particularly isolation, small-scale, limited job opportunities, and rural fundamentalism.

The researchers approached the problems from four perspectives: the structure of rural labor markets; the influence of school programs and educators on women's opportunities; life on the farm; and rural values and traditions. The papers on the first three subjects are presented here.*

The paper written by Ptarmigan Teal, formerly with the Center for Rural Communities in western Massachusetts and now a construction contractor in rural Washington, looks at the ways in which the labor market constricts opportunities for women in general and, specifically what kinds of training might best serve rural women. Teal's paper is based in part on her experiences with small-scale rural businesses in New England. She provides a statistical perspective on nonmetropolitan women in the labor market: participation rates, occupational categories and earnings.

The focus of her paper is on the significant, but often overlooked, number of women who are self-employed and she provides detailed information on women-owned firms in New England. To give legitimacy to her suggestions, Teal draws on her own experiences in providing technical assistance to rural women in the hilltowns of western Massachusetts. She strongly recommends more attention to and support for entrepreneurial training, which would enable women to develop economic opportunities needed to supplement their farm incomes.

The paper on farm women and vocational education was written by Frances Hill, professor of political science at the School of Government, University of Texas, who interviewed more than 100 midwestern farmwomen about their lives and their needs. Hill describes the different roles that farmwomen play in farming operations -- managerial, technical, financial, marketing -- as well as their roles as wives and mothers. She also discusses the present employment of rural women who have left the farm.

Based on her research, the author builds a strong case for more vocational agriculture programs for farmwomen and, like Teal, suggests more entrepreneurial training.

The paper written by Faith Dunne, a resident of rural Vermont and a professor of rural education at Dartmouth College, draws on in-

*The fourth, "I Don't Want to Drive a Ma[illegible]ruck! Rural Southern Values and Attitudes: Barriers to Women in Non-Traditional Vocational Education" by Roberta Carney and Mary Lou Taylor, on rural values and tradition, is available through the Education Research Information Center, ERIC.

terviews in rural schools of Vermont and New Hampshire. The women she interviewed aspired to careers but resisted equity imposed on them by external forces.

Dunne found that the attitudes of school staff and local education policies were the most influential factors affecting women's enrollment in nontraditional programs and, therefore, their opportunities. She found that teachers influence not only students but local employers as well, with the result that progressive teachers and counselors increase nontraditional enrollment and employment while, predictably, traditional teachers and counselors deter both. Dunne argues for more emphasis on reeducating teachers and employers, for expansion of programs that are sex neutral and thus less specialized, and, like Teal and Hill, for more entrepreneurial training for rural women.

The three papers are preceded by a paper written by the editor, which puts vocational education for women into an historical perspective, tracing the change in vocational education and opportunities for women since the first vocational education legislation in 1917. The paper also presents the current status of rural women as reported by the Vocational Education Data System and by state data: namely, where and in what programs women and girls are participating today. It depicts how women in rural areas seem to fare four years after the enactment of the most recent vocational education amendments which first included sex equity as an explicit goal.

Finally, the papers are followed by a series of policy recommendations and suggestions by Margaret Dunkle. Dunkle has been involved very actively in the development of Title IX policies and has served on the District of Columbia Advisory Council for Vocational Education and as a consultant on vocational education to the State of New York.

I would like to acknowledge the helpful comments I received from Jonathan P. Sher, the assistance of Tom Schultz, leader of the Rural Team in carrying out the studies, and Marc S. Tucker, Associate Director of Education Policy and Organization, and the editing assistance of Anita Bretzfield, and the support of the Vocational Education Team at NIE.

May 1981

Stuart A. Rosenfeld

I. Recollections and Realities

by Stuart A. Rosenfeld

Federally funded vocational education,* over the years, has served equal numbers of men and women. The programs for each, however, have differed markedly. Women traditionally have been trained for service vocations in direct support of male-dominated professions, e.g., health occupations to assist physicians, office work to support business managers, and home economics to serve husbands and families. This has resulted in, for the most part, low paying or, in the case of home economics, nonpaying jobs. Men, conversely, have been trained overwhelmingly for occupations requiring manual skills and/or demanding technical compentencies. The male-dominated programs were geared toward higher paying jobs that allowed more independence and, ordinarily, greater job potential.

Vocational education served residents of both urban and rural areas. However, the programs offered in each area differed. Rural schools emphasized agriculture programs while urban schools stressed trade and industrial programs.

Up until the last decade, few questioned the separation of "male" and "female" occupations, just as few questioned the wisdom of different orientations for rural and urban vocational education programs. In 1968, when the Vocational Education Act of 1963 was amended for the first time, many rural schools still offered programs only in vocational agriculture and, as might be expected, girls were not participating in significant numbers. As a result, most rural girls taking vocational education were enrolled in home economics, in preparation for family life, rather than in programs for gainful employment. Women who did wish to prepare for paid employment generally enrolled in traditional women's programs, such as office or health occupations -- if those programs were available at all. Thus, rural women and girls suffered the dual barriers of sex stereotyping and limited choices.

A major policy change occurred in the early 1970's when civil rights legislation was extended to cover discrimination on the basis of sex as well as race. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibited sex discrimination in education, including vocational edu-

*Throughout this paper, the term vocational education means "organized educational programs which are directly related to the preparation of individuals for paid or unpaid employment, or for additional preparation for a career requiring other than a baccalaureate or advanced degree..." (Public Law 94-482, Section 195 (1)). It thus includes secondary, postsecondary, and adult programs.

cation,[1] thus improving women's economic opportunities. With educators' growing awareness of the ways in which schooling restricted women's economic opportunities, the 1976 Education Amendments to the Vocational Education Act went further than simply prohibiting discrimination: the Act, as amended, charges states and local education agencies to take steps to overcome sex discrimination and sex stereotyping. However, it did not take into account rural needs or the effects of local conditions on implementation; this was left to individual states. According to federal law and its regulations, policies appropriate for urban women were equally appropriate for rural women, and vice versa.

Thus, when new vocational education policies are under consideration, the following questions are relevant: how are rural women faring under current laws and policies? What are their special needs? What might be done to better serve them?

This chapter and the others contained in this publication address these issues. The studies are based on the assumption that social and economic conditions endemic to rural life affect rural women's educational and economic opportunities in unique ways and at the same time create special problems for them.

For example, rural communities tend to be more conservative, more resistant to change than cities.[2] Local values, particularly those rooted in religious beliefs, help to perpetuate traditional roles. Therefore, rural fundamentalism, where it exists, is an inhibiting force for women wanting nontraditional careers.

Another example is rural isolation, both physical and social, which imposes many restrictions on women's educational opportunities. Adult rural women often lack the transportation or child-care facilities that would enable them to attend classes.[3] A sparse population also means fewer support systems for those women who wish to enter nontraditional work despite the barriers.

The paucity of job opportunities in rural areas is yet another impediment to equity. Specialized job training, often for nonexistent jobs, has little appeal for women who expect to remain in their communities.

As a result of fewer occupational alternatives, lasting traditional values, and lack of mobility, rural girls are seldom exposed to role models of women working in nontraditional jobs.[4]

Rural and urban differences in family aspirations persist despite today's trend toward later marriages and fewer children.[5] As in the past, rural women generally marry sooner and stay married longer than their urban sisters[6] and therefore are less likely to be concerned about the immediate need for work. For rural housewives, the daily routine is still very demanding and time-consuming. Typical urban conveniences, such as supermarkets, drugstores, nursery schools, and diaper services are less accessible, if available at all. Often there

are no nearby playmates for young children. Moreover, many rural women have gardens and animals to tend, a necessity in their partially self-sufficient lives. Thus, even if traditional 9-to-5 jobs were available, rural housewives could seldom take them.

As a result, the modern rural woman is caught between a rock and a hard place. She wants expanded opportunities and more career options but does not want to upset local traditions and values, and has little access to the requisite training for employment.

Despite the constraints on rural women, there are some rural conditions favorable to women's opportunities. For instance, rural women play more active roles in community politics and hold more offices than urban women[7] and so are in a position to influence local policies, including education policies.

Also, the relatively small number of students in rural schools can be beneficial for girls. Because many states set minimum class size as a requirement for aid, the lack of economy associated with small schools provides an incentive for school administrators to include girls in programs in order to reduce per pupil costs and to justify new programs. Moreover, Kane and Frazee[8] suggest that, because rural women are more likely to have been in mixed classes as a result of small schools, they are more readily integrated into vocational courses.

Due to their historic partnership role on the farm, rural women are accustomed to legitimate "work," if not always paid labor. A large and growing number of rural women already have part-time businesses and home industries, and some even have formal responsibilities in family businesses.[9] These women, however, are rarely included in labor market statistics, are not eligible for many employment benefits, and quite often have lacked the formal education that could increase their effectiveness and productivity. As uncounted workers, they also fail to influence state vocational education plans which are dependent to a large extent on government labor market statistics.

It is evident that the conditions thwarting women's opportunities for vocational education in rural school districts are exacerbated by the strength of their historical roots. Thus, current issues that rural women face today can best be addressed if they are understood in their historical context.

This chapter provides the backdrop for succeeding chapters as well as describing what exists today. Using examples to make up for the lack of any national data on specifically rural vocational education, changes in vocational education for women are noted. The sex equity provisions of law that most strongly affect local vocational education policy and practices -- the Vocational Education Act of 1963 as amended in 1976 -- are summarized and what is known about the participation of rural women in vocational education is presented to the extent that current data permit.

A Backward Glance at Vocational Education of Rural Women

Women's access to vocational education programs is a long-standing issue. They sought greater participation even in the planning as the first federal legislation for vocational education, the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917, was being formulated. While the legislation was still in debate, the Congress proposed the establishment of a commission of nine men to study vocational education. Dr. Susan Kingsbury, director of the Women's Education and Industries Union of Boston, wrote to Charles Prosser, head of the National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education, on June 13, 1913, requesting that the word "men" be changed to "persons" so that women could be appointed.[10] Prosser's response to Kingsbury was that while he was a progressive and sympathetic to her cause, he did not want to suggest changes that might jeopardize chances for passage of the bill. He instead came up with the suggestion that she write to the President's wife and request her help. Women ultimately were included in the commission.

Eventually vocational educators recognized women's needs and established a separate program, home economics. This was considered a "proper" education for women, and in the Smith-Hughes Act, states were authorized to use up to 10 percent of the total federal funds for courses in home economics. Subsequent legislation accorded home economics even greater respect: the George-Reed Act of 1929, which extended vocational education in rural areas, assigned one-half of the funds to home economics.

Women and Girls in Vocational Agriculture

The impression one gets from legislative history is that home economics was the only vocational education available for women in rural areas. Yet nothing in the federal legislation prevented women from participating in programs for gainful employment -- vocational agriculture in rural areas and trade and industrial programs in urban areas.

Surprisingly, state enrollment data indicate that from 1910 to 1920, women did participate in vocational agriculture programs in greater numbers than they do now. In fact, in Wisconsin in 1917 more girls than boys attended many of the county agriculture schools.[11] And in the 1920's, Michigan reported that enrollments in its vocational agriculture programs were about 25 percent female.

There are a number of possible explanations for this phenomenon. For one thing, there were many family farms, a large proportion of which were only marginally profitable, and women's contributions to farm productivity were essential to survival. Studies of farmwomen in the first quarter of the century show that they actually provided about 80 percent of the cash used for daily living expenses by selling

what they produced and processed.[12] A survey conducted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1919 revealed that one-third of all farmwomen were responsible for all farm and household accounts. Furthermore, in agricultural communities, work life and home life were one and the same inasmuch as women were not isolated from their husbands' work; it was also their own work.

Given these facts, it is not surprising that some aspects of vocational agriculture may well have been considered appropriate for women. In fact, agriculture programs and home economics programs often overlapped, much as did farm work and home work. It was not until industrialization reached rural areas that women became economically dependent on their husbands, which may explain why cities showed a more rapid differentiation of vocational education classes by sex.[13] School-based home economics was presumably an urban program (based on the fact that federal funds were distributed according to urban populations). Rural agriculture schools thus offered home economics programs as well as farming programs.

The high female enrollment in vocational agriculture in some states may also have been due to the way schools were organized and enrollments reported. Support for this theory is provided by Wisconsin's stipulation for state aid to vocational education which began in 1912.[14]

> All schools giving the 4-year agricultural course must offer some other course for girls at least during the last 2 years. One year of agricultural work is usually all girls ought to be expected to take. Domestic science is urged as a course to accompany the agriculture whenever possible.

While this may not be equity the way we think of it today, at least in Wisconsin educators recognized the value of girls taking courses in agriculture -- albeit not with the same intensity as boys.

In 1925, Alabama began a program of joint agriculture and home economics programs for boys and girls. Districts either combined the two programs or exchanged teachers. The state later extended the combined programs to include adult classes.[15]

Another possible explanation for the high enrollment of women in agriculture programs is that many agriculture schools were the only diploma-granting secondary institutions in the county. Girls at that time were likely to be enrolled in secondary education, and agriculture schools may have been the only secondary schools available.

Finally, economy was a factor. Rural schools were by definition small, and girls were often welcomed as a means of reaching class sizes that justified the expenditure for additional teachers.

According to federal statistics, the high enrollment of females in vocational agricultural schools was short-lived. With the changing social and economic conditions, the reasons for high female participa-

tion disappeared. Schools grew and became more specialized, separating the agriculture programs from home economics; farms decreased in number and grew in size; and what was previously urban work infiltrated rural life. Secondary education expanded, vocational education enrollments rose, and the enrollment of girls in nontraditional programs -- or at least nontraditional schools -- dropped.

By 1930, in Wisconsin there were 2,900 boys and girls in vocational agriculture; by 1955, there were 17,000 boys and girls. Girls were relegated to home economics programs, with courses in home canning and gardening, and to 4-H Clubs.

By the thirties, all documents, journals, and texts on vocational agriculture referred to the "boys" or the "men." In issues of the Agricultural Education Journal of that period, the only two pictures of women bore these captions: "Oneida (Iowa) Farm Women Bring Their Husbands to Evening Classes," and "Boone County (Georgia) Women Have Contributed Much to the Success of Men's Classes."[16]

Women and Girls in Nonagricultural Programs

Although vocational agriculture was the dominant program in rural areas, scattered programs in trade and industry were offered, particularly in the Northeast, where women were employed in the textile industries. These programs, like the vocational agriculture programs, show a high female enrollment through the 1930's -- 33 percent in 1925 and 30 percent in 1935 -- compared to 17 percent in 1979. One might conclude that women in the thirties had more opportunities than today. But those enrollments, like the vocational agriculture enrollments, could well have been the result of program classification and of enrollment reporting methods.

Thus, it is important to look closely not only at enrollment patterns but also at the occupational training they actually represent. According to state reports, prior to the Vocational Education Act of 1963, trade and industrial programs included courses in millinery, dressmaking, and food preparation, courses now included in "Occupational Home Economics" or "Health Occupations." They were extensions of "women's work," formerly done in the home -- hardly nontraditional training. Some industrial courses, such as power machine operation, were given, but usually only in or near cities where industrialization was taking place.

During the Depression, financial needs made women's incomes essential rather than supplemental, and since employment was unobtainable generally, interest surged within vocational education programs to prepare women for handicraft industries. This could help families avoid going on relief.[17]

Rural Women at Midcentury

America's entry into World War II had a major impact on the occupational training offered to women and on vocational education en-

rollments. During the war women were needed in nontraditional occupations to replace men, especially in critical industries. No one then faulted them for leaving their children with babysitters in order to work in the factories and the fields as long as it contributed to the war effort. Rural women were vocationally trained to operate tractors, to work in nearby factories, and to drive trucks.[18] Women successfully did "men's work."

The changes, attributable to necessity rather than social consciousness, once again proved to be only transitory. With peace came strong pressures on schools to return to traditional occupational training. Bearing in mind the need to boost the sagging birth rate, educators warned that vocational education for women reduced their interest in childbearing, and they called for a return to different educations for women and men. The schools, one text argued, "must train men to serve usefully and earn a family living. They must train women to bear and rear wisely two or three children...." Educators concluded that girls should take courses in homemaking and child care and that their education should definitely be pointed toward the "home life of the girl and not toward professional employment."[19]

After the war some women wanted to continue working and were needed in the labor market. Training, however, was offered only in "acceptable" women's occupations, e.g., telephone switchboard work, cosmetology, and cleaning and dyeing. Women's work on farms was still essential to maintaining family farms, but with the rapid growth of large-scale farming and mechanization, family farms were beginning to disappear.

Vocational agriculture programs adapted quickly, adding elements of agribusiness training for such occupations as agricultural mechanics, agricultural services, and agricultural construction. These new programs typically demanded either heavy work or work away from the home and were strongly male-dominated. Therefore, female enrollment in vocational agriculture programs remained low throughout the 1940's. The separate status of women became more pronounced. There were advisory councils for women's programs and course materials specifically tailored for women.[20]

By the late 1960's, scattered drives for greater sex equity plus women's demands for access to all labor markets put new pressures on vocational education. In rural areas, however, vocational agriculture continued to be almost completely male dominated in the composition of classes, staff, administration, and youth organizations. There were no women vocational agriculture instructors. In fact, not until 1975 was the first female employed as a vocational agriculture teacher in Wisconsin, and it was not until 1980 that the first woman was enrolled in the large vocational agriculture teacher training program at Ohio State University.

The Future Farmers of America (FFA) offered the largest and most effective leadership training programs for youth in public vocational

agriculture education. It was more than just a "club"; it was an integral part of the vocational agriculture program and was funded through federal legislation. It was also exclusively male.

According to educators of the time, the FFA's reluctance to admit girls was based not on prejudice, but on pragmatic issues. For instance, the organization claimed that because girls mature faster than boys, girls would have unfair advantages in traditional FFA contests and would take over leadership.[21] To avoid integrating girls into the FFA, one suggestion was that a "separate but equal" organization be created: Future Farmerettes of America!

In 1969, girls finally were admitted to the FFA and, contrary to the organization's worst fears, they do not dominate the national or State leadership; in fact, relatively few girls have made their way into many of the still traditionally male vocational agriculture programs.

The Impact of the Education Amendments of 1976 on Rural Women

In the 1970's, equal economic opportunity was a basic demand of the women's movement. And since equality in the labor market could be achieved only through access to the requisite education and training, the drive to admit women to any and all vocational education programs began in earnest. Thus vocational education became a prime target for civil rights activists as well as for women's advocacy groups.

Because the movement for women's rights was primarily urban based, the initiatives originated in the cities. In fact, today's vocational education literature relating to sex equity contains virtually no references to the special needs or demands of rural women. It is reasonable to conclude that little or no attention was paid to their problems.

However, if policy analysts had examined the data on rural women, they would have found distinct differences between the problems, needs, and constraints of urban women and rural women.[22] While information would have revealed fewer job opportunties for rural women, paradoxically, it also would have revealed that rural women were of tremendous importance to local economies: as farm wives, business partners in family concerns, entrepreneurs with small cottage industries, and sometimes, in the formal labor market, as employees of textile mills, canneries, and other rural industries.

Additional analysis of the data on rural conditions would have disclosed weak links between rural women and national women's organizations, strong family ties, and community loyalty. It also would have indicated that, in addition to the need to meet rising costs, rural women wanted more fulfilling work outside of the family.[23]

A further look at the facts about education and rural women would show less educational attainment than in urban areas; more functional illiteracy; and fewer high school graduates, particularly among

minority rural women.[24] In 1975, 19 percent of black rural women, compared to 7 percent of black urban women, completed less than 5 years of schooling.[25]

Studies of rural schools and site visits indicate continuing traditional values in rural school systems which, in turn, affect vocational education enrollments. Rural school administrators and teachers are continually under pressure to conform to local values and to adopt local policies, even restrictive ones. They are more remote from state administrators and professional peers, less noticeable, and thus under less pressure to conform to state and national policies. Further, there simply are not enough federal funds available to enforce regulations such as Title IX in small and isolated schools. Allocations to rural districts are often so small that districts are apt to refuse money in order to avoid compliance.

Despite the fact that rural conditions warranted consideration, during the 1975 reauthorization hearings on the Vocational Education Act, no authoritative information on rural women in vocational education was entered into the record.[26] There was, however, a plethora of information on issues facing women in vocational education nationally.[27] In 1974, the federally funded vocational education data collection system, Project Baseline, published a supplementary report on Women in Vocational Education.[28] Among its major findings were facts many educators already knew: that most programs were dominated by one sex, with women concentrated in programs leading to low-paying or dead-end occupations; that course materials perpetuated the stereotyping of females; that teaching practices discriminated against them; and that vocational education administration and policy-making were almost exclusively dominated by men. At about the same time, Steiger and Cooper[29] published similar findings for the Secretary's Committee on the Rights and Responsibilities of Women.

As a result of these fundings, the Vocational Education Act of 1963 was amended in the Education Amendments of 1976, with the express intent of reducing sex discrimination and stereotyping. the Act included the charge "to overcome sex discrimination and sex stereotyping and thereby furnish equal educational opportunities to persons of both sexes...."[30] Intended ultimately to influence local practices, the Act includes specific provisions to address women's needs (see Appendix A). The Act's basic grant could be spent by states, for example, on day-care services, on support for women in nontraditional programs, or on programs for displaced homemakers. Levels of expenditures for most legislated purposes, however, are not obligatory. The only specified expenditure required is $50,000 to support a sex equity coordinator in each State to assist districts in reducing sex discrimination and stereotyping. The Act also requires that: states specify in their plans how they will ensure equal access to men and women; states be held accountable for carrying out their plan; and states be responsible for more female representation on State Advisory Councils.

The permissive nature of the sex equity provisions contrasts with

other equity provisions that require concrete financial remedies and offer federal dollars. For instance, adults, the disadvantaged, the handicapped and those with limited English proficiency are targeted for specific percentages of the states' allotments, and districts that are economically depressed, have little wealth, or have high concentrations of poverty are given preference in funding allocations.

Current provisions for sex equity have little impact on distribution formulas and, in fact, under the current law, the same dollar that is targeted to the poor district and set aside for use with adults may also be expected to carry out the sex equity provisions! Although the intent of the Act is unquestionably to improve access for both men and women to all programs of vocational education, it is designed primarily to encourage, not require, particular efforts. The degree of success depends on the ability to influence local social values rather than on the money to "purchase" social goals. To provide information on the impact of this legislation on women, the Act mandated a national data collection system, the Vocational Education Data System (VEDS), that maintains enrollment and staff data by sex; it mandated a special investigation of sex bias; and it mandated a comprehensive study of vocational education to be carried out by the National Institute of Education (NIE). The study was to include information on sex equity. There was no requirement, however, to distinguish between urban and rural districts, and consequently only the NIE study provides any useful information on conditions in rural districts.

Although urban and rural women were treated alike in national policy, as the 1976 amendments to the Vocational Education Act were being formulated rural conditions were being raised as legitimate policy issues. One of the first agencies to recognize the particular educational needs of rural women was the National Advisory Council on Women's Educational Programs (NACWEP), established by the Women's Education Equity Act in the Education Amendments of 1974. In its first annual report the NACWEP stated:[31]

> The Council determined that rural women and their needs for educational equity was an area which was insufficiently explored. Looking ahead to the FY 1977 pribrities for the Women's Educational Equity Program which are expected to include rural women, the Council initiated information gathering efforts of its own.

The Council established a Special Committee on Rural Women and proceeded to hold four regional meetings to learn more about the issues firsthand from different rural populations. The report of the meetings and an associated study concluded that "with respect to the educational needs, little attention is being directed to rural girls and women -- by either rural educators and advocates for rural development, or by women's education advocates and providers." With respect to vocational education, the study went on:[32]

Rural areas suffer a dearth of role models and field observation experiences which can broaden the realization of young girls that the world offers other career choices than motherhood and secretarial work. Schools themselves do little to dispel such myths when students see males as administrators, coaches, and decision-makers -- while they see females in charge of younger children, working as school secretaries, and handling food-service. (Vocational schools that serve many rural residents were felt by consultation participants to be notably traditional and in need of change.) Very special efforts are needed in rural communities to provide wider experiences and to remove sex-role stereotyping.... This includes truly welcoming girls in Future Farmers of America....

One important consequence of the Council's interest in rural women was that it served as a stimulus for the formation of organizations of and for rural women, such as Rural American Women and the Council on Appalachian Women, certain to be heard in new policy debates.

Rural Women and Vocational Education in 1980

Now that the Education Amendments of 1976 and the sex equity provisions of the Vocational Education Act have been in place long enough to be implemented, how have they affected rural America? What is the status of vocational education for rural women?

Unfortunately, the reports of the federally mandated data systems are not very helpful in evaluating rural education. The VEDS, which presents enrollments by occupational program and by sex, maintains only state-level data, obscuring any intrastate differences that may exist between urban and rural areas. The Office of Planning, Budget, and Evaluation's reports on the distribution of federal education dollars by district do not include enrollment by sex. The study of sex discrimination and sex stereotyping, mandated in the Education Amendments of 1976, is completed but sheds little light on rural conditions. That study, conducted by the American Institute of Research,[33] chose a sampling method that merged into one stratum all city schools with fewer than 500,000 students -- hardly a rural population.

In 1980, the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) conducted a survey of enrollments by sex and institution; unfortunately, the survey has not been coded according to urban or rural characteristics, nor has it been analyzed in any disaggregated form. Furthermore, because of the way the "universe" was chosen, a large number of rural schools with fewer than five programs have been excluded..

The best information currently available on the status of rural women comes from a study on the distribution of federal, state, and local vocational education funds being conducted by the University of California at Berkeley.[34] It includes recent state-level data and selected on-site case studies.

Enrollments

Evaluating program enrollment by sex has traditionally been done by following a rule of thumb originally established by the former Office of Education: any program with enrollments of more than four-fifths male or female is considered either male- or female-intensive. However, it is important to understand why these program enrollment figures may be misleading. First, there are general vocational education program areas (e.g., vocational agriculture, office occupations, distributive education). Then, within these general program areas, there are occupationally specific programs (e.g., agricultural mechanics within vocational agriculture, resort management within distributive education, electronic technology within technical education).[35] Therefore, any determination of discrimination in sex enrollment must take into account the enrollment distribution not within the general programs but within the occupationally specific programs. This could mean that even though program enrollment consists of equal numbers of men and women, the women might comprise only one-third of the occupationally specific programs. Thus, a quick look would indicate equal proportions, but a more astute look would show differences.

The use of female enrollment ratios in general vocational education programs for evaluating sex bias and sex stereotyping thus leaves much to be desired, but because such ratios are the only readily available evaluative measures, they are widely accepted. Data currently collected and reported are a cost-efficiency compromise and lessen the burden on local administrators. Enrollments are reported by only the most common 116 of the hundreds of general vocational programs offered.

Since the nationally collected data cannot be readily analyzed in terms of urban-rural diffferences, for the sake of rural analysis an assumption must be made: at least one occupational area, vocational agriculture, is predominately rural, and the enrollments typify rural populations. Therefore, it is useful to examine the vocational agriculture data separately.

The first and most obvious conclusion drawn from U.S. Department of Education data is that female enrollment in nontraditional programs has been increasing in recent years. Female enrollment in the general area of vocational agriculture was reported to be 5.3 percent in 1972 and 19.1 percent in 1979 (21.1 percent in the occupationally specific programs leading to employment.) The 1979 figure is indeed an improvement over the past couple of decades.

The improvement, however, is not quite as striking when examining disaggregated data from programs, from states, and at different levels of education. The largest female enrollment, for example, is in ornamental horticulture, which comprises almost 20 percent of the total vocational agriculture enrollment. The more traditional programs, such as agricultural production and agricultural mechanics, show only 16 percent and 10 percent female enrollment, respectively.

Table 1.1 shows female enrollment in vocational agriculture programs by type of institution. Generally, enrollment is highest in the junior and community colleges and lowest in the comprehensive high schools. Area vocational centers show mixed results: high female enrollment in agricultural production and agricultural supplies services but very low female enrollment in agricultural mechanics and natural resources.

TABLE 1.1

Female Enrollment in Vocational Agriculture Programs, by Type of Institution, 1979

Programs	Females in Program, Percentage		
	Comprehensive High Schools	Junior or Community Colleges	Vocational Centers
Agricultural Production	15.3	25.6	24.5
Agricultural Supplies/Services	14.6	31.1	33.0
Agricultural Mechanics	4.5	8.7	2.4
Agricultural Products	16.5	34.0	30.4
Ornamental Horticulture	41.4	44.7	52.8
Renewable Natural Resources	23.0	25.3	17.8
Forestry	13.7	21.0	9.1
Other Agricultural Programs	17.4	43.3	26.8
Coop Programs	14.3	32.5	25.7
Agriculture Instructors	4	7.3	10.3

Source: Office of Civil Rights survey, 1979.

An even more detailed analysis, done by the state of California in 1978 and shown in Table 1.2, shows enrollments broken down to their most job-specific level. Although the information was collected too soon to reflect changes due to the 1976 law, the table is useful for describing both the variety of courses available within vocational agriculture and the trends occurring even prior to the new laws.

TABLE 1.2

Trends in Female Enrollment in Vocational Agriculture Programs in California

Programs	Females in Program, Percentage		
	Fiscal 1973	Fiscal 1975	Fiscal 1977
Agricultural Production	26.3	30.3	35.4
Animal Husbandry	36.6	48.8	58.7
Agricultural Services	26.5	49.4	43.3
Farm Mechanics	0	3.4	6.9
Agricultural Mechanics	5.7	5.1	10.8
Agricultural Construction	0	0.9	1.4
Agricultural Products	32.6	16.0	22.1
Ornamental Horticulture	32.0	39.3	39.8
Horticulture	39.3	79.5	71.9
Nursery Management	7.6	28.9	46.1
Agricultural Resources	12.6	30.8	31.5
Forestry	12.7	15.4	20.8
Water	2.6	0	10.9
Turf Management	0	0	18.5

Source: California Occupational Information Coordinating Committee, Moving Toward Sex Equity in Vocational Education, December 1978.

A comparison of the proportion of women enrolled in occupationally oriented vocational agriculture programs in 10 states is shown in Table 1.3. The differences among states in female enrollments is striking and bears close scrutiny.

Although female enrollment in agricultural mechanics is consistently low, enrollments in other programs, such as agricultural production, vary markedly. According to Table 1.3, the northern states have the most balanced programs in terms of male-female enrollments, with New York showing a 41 percent female enrollment in agricultural production -- the largest of the general vocational agriculture programs. However, as a representative of rural conditions, New York State may be an aberration. Since New York City's large vocational agriculture program -- with 50 percent female enrollment -- includes Small Animal Science and Horse Handling and Care, with a high female enrollment, in its agricultural production offering. Thus, even with the occupationally specific level of disaggregation currently used, programs can still hide differences by sex.

Attitudes and Opportunities

The number of men and women enrolled in nontraditional courses reveals only part of the story of the effects of the 1976 legislation. Some changes in enrollments may be simply a continuation of social and economic trends that would have occurred regardless of the sex equity provisions of the Act -- an occurrence referred to in statistical analysis as "maturation effects." More focused examinations of the impact of the sex equity provisions may provide a better picture of how actively vocational educators are responding to the laws.

One study recently submitted to the NIE investigated the special populations, including women, targeted in the Vocational Education Act since 1976. The work was based on case studies conducted at 15 sites, five of which were rural. The study showed that school districts paid little attention to state or federal requirements for affirmative action to overcome sex discrimination and sex stereotyping. According to the local administrators interviewed, women had not been denied entry and therefore there was no discrimination and little reason for any special efforts by their respective communities.

The investigators did note that in one rural site female enrollment in nontraditional programs was and always had been high. However, the high female enrollment, according to the administrator, reflected the need to develop rural survival skills rather than to prepare for paid employment. This, of course, could have economic value as real as paid employment, but it would not be recognized by the evaluative criteria in the Vocational Education Act. The study also reported that community-based organizations in cities, provided some of the best training opportunities for women, but that such organizations were practically nonexistent in the rural areas.

TABLE 1.3

Female Enrollment in Vocational Agriculture Programs for 10 States, 1979

Programs	Percent Females Enrolled									
	AL	GA	MI	NY	OK	PA	SD	VA	WA	WI
Agricultural Production	3.8	10.0	25.2	40.8	14.3	12.0	13.2	4.5	26.2	15.9
Agricultural Supplies/Services	10.6	7.2	18.2*	21.5	18.9	--	7.8*	26.1	43.0	15.2
Agricultural Mechanics	2.4	6.1	2.9	9.3	2.1	8.6	1.7	5.2	2.7	8.1
Agricultural Products	8.9	9.1	14.6	35.8	36.4*	26.8*	--	0.0*	4.5*	20.0
Ornamental Horticulture	46.5	42.7	51.2	51.2	49.3	64.0	23.3*	47.7	49.2	44.9
Renewal of Natural Resources	2.8*	23.4	22.8	13.0	11.3	16.7	37.5*	6.4	32.3	24.9
Forestry	5.9	11.6	18.7	11.5	12.8	7.4	--	11.4	20.4	10.2

*Based on enrollments of fewer than 100.

Source: Office of Civil Rights survey, 1979.

A 15-state study of rural sites found that educators are likely to face conservative attitudes toward sex equity in rural communities. These attitudes sometimes resulted from a lack of awareness of career options; other times there was open resistance to nontraditional values.[36]

Another small-scale study of vocational education in rural areas examined districts that received little or no federal funds.[37] The researcher who visited schools and state education agencies in two western states, found that enrollment was highly sex-segregated and that there were no local policies aimed at reducing sex discrimination or sex stereotyping. Administrators argued that either their districts did not want to change existing policies or that there were not enough employment opportunities to justify female participation in some courses.

These case studies and Dunne's work prove once again that the remoteness and small scale of rural school districts allow administrators more independence from state and federal governance. Progress toward sex equity is contingent on local initiatives more than on state policies.

While female enrollments by program are of interest to policy analysts, the figures do not necessarily get at the heart of the matter. Since the real problem is that rural women are disadvantaged in the labor market, particularly in the highest paying occupations,[38] it is important to examine female enrollments in rural areas in terms of the wages of the opportunities at which the programs are directed.

A study of the distribution of vocational education funds, underway at the University of California, includes such as analysis in selected states. All occupational programs in those states were categorized in terms of the expected average wages they can command for such skills, and ranked in quali[illegible] from "high" to "low."

The results of the analysis in three states (see Table 1.4) confirms what has been charged repeatedly; that women are concentrated in programs that lead to the lowest paying jobs. But the urban-rural differences are even more striking. In Colorado, for instance, more than 54 percent of the women are in the programs with the lowest expected wages while 32 percent of women in Denver are in similar programs. About 4 percent of the rural women are in programs for the high[illegible] paying jobs in Colorado while about 6 percent of the women in Den[illegible] are in such programs. In Illinois, 3.4 percent of the rural wome[illegible] are in programs for the highest paying jobs but 16.3 percent of women in Chicago are in these higher paying programs. These analyses show that the concentration of women in vocational education programs leading to low paying jobs is even more pronounced in rural school districts that in urban districts.

Program Content for Women

As already indicated, even fully disaggregated enrollments can

TABLE 1.4

Percent of Enrollment in High School Vocational Education Programs in Three States, by Level of Expected Wages, 1978-79

State/Location	Expected Wages *							
	High		Medium High		Medium Low		Low	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
California								
Rural Districts	30.5	2.6	41.8	26.2	11.9	31.3	15.8	39.9
Los Angeles	40.2	3.2	25.6	26.1	19.0	36.5	15.2	34.3
State-wide	42.8	3.7	27.1	26.2	16.8	35.4	13.3	35.7
Colorado								
Rural Districts	54.0	4.3	30.4	25.6	5.6	15.7	10.1	54.4
Denver	47.2	5.6	31.0	43.1	9.6	19.1	12.2	32.2
State-wide	50.9	5.9	24.3	29.2	13.5	22.2	11.3	42.7
Illinois								
Rural Districts	40.6	3.4	40.8	7.8	2.2	49.8	6.4	39.1
Chicago	40.3	16.3	28.6	15.7	20.6	39.4	10.6	29.7
State-wide	48.4	9.4	34.0	13.9	12.3	37.5	10.3	39.3

* The expected wages were determined by matching each vocational education proposal to the occupations at which it is directed, finding the average wages paid and ranking the programs into quartiles so that 25 percent of the students are in high expected wage occupational programs, 25 percent are in medium high expected wage occupational programs, etc.

Source: Benson, Charles S. and Garth Hoachlander, The Distribution of Federal Funds Under the Vocational Education Act: Interstate and Intrastate Allocations, Contract 400-78-0039, National Institute of Education (Berkeley, CA.: University of California, 1981)

paint a misleading picture of the vocational education rural women are receiving. Another major barrier to evaluating vocational education enrollments is the wide variation in the length of the programs. A program that requires 200 course hours in the student's specialty in one institution might require 400 course hours in another institution, Even within a single institution the amount of instruction can vary. For instance, early requirements for state aid to agricultural schools in Wisconsin required boys in vocational agriculture schools to take a full four years of courses, but required that girls take only two years. Even today the length of the training in some courses varies by sex.

The state of Minnesota, in 1978, collected data on vocational education in relation to both the hours of specialty training and the sex of the participants: 27 percent of the vocational agriculture enrollment was female. In the most intensive programs, however -- those in which the students took more than 600 hours of agricultural courses -- women comprised less than 4 percent of the enrollment. In the intermediate programs -- those which included 301 to 600 hours -- women made up 11 percent. And in the least intensive programs -- those of fewer than 100 hours in vocational agriculture courses -- women made up 52 percent.[40] Thus, although women were quite heavily enrolled in vocational agriculture, they were exposed to less occupational instruction than were boys. Women were also less likely to be employed in agriculturally related occupations after graduation. Only slightly more than 2 percent of the females in a Minnesota class of 1978 were so employed. In contrast, more than 21 percent of the males took agriculture-related jobs.

Vocational Education Staff in Rural Areas

Despite the increase in female enrollment in federally funded nontraditional programs, there has been little increase in the proportion of female staff. In 1979, less than 5 percent of the vocational agriculture instructors in schools surveyed by the Office of Civil Rights were female. The data, again, are limited in their utility by the lack of urban-rural differentiation. Therefore, throughout this paper, the term vocational agriculture will be used as a proxy for rural vocational education, despite the increase in rural nonagricultural training over the last two decades.

The reason for concern about the composition of vocational education staff and administration has already been stated: a teaching staff influences sex stereotyping, particularly in rural areas where there are fewer nontraditional role models. Therefore, state and local policies to reduce sex stereotyping among staff could be considered prerequisite for sex equity within program enrollment. Yet in 1979, according to the Office of Civil Rights survey, each of ten states (Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Louisiana, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Rhode Island, Utah, and Vermont) employed only one female vocational agriculture teacher. In Alabama, Oklahoma, and West

Virginia, less than 2 percent of instructors were female.

Some states produced a better mix, but it did not always mean more sex equity. For instance, nearly 20 percent of New Jersey's agriculture teachers are female, but the state data shows that about 65 percent of them were in ornamental horticulture, a program that is traditionally female.

Despite the acknowledged importance of role models in overcoming sex bias, according to the University of California survey only 5 percent of the schools reported any staff changes in 1978-79 to promote sex equity.

Expenditures of Federal Funds on Provisions for Sex Equity

Since the use of funds targeted at achieving sex equity is permissive, with the exception of programs for displaced homemakers, an appropriate question is: what actually is being spent? Without school district expenditure data for legislative purposes -- which is not being collected by the federal government -- it is impossible to evaluate rural expenditures. Reports to the Department of Education do show that expenditures on these measures are low.

Fiscal year 1979 VEDS state information indicates that, of the $493 million allocated to the states for the basic grant and for program improvement and support services, only $7.2 million, of 1.5 percent was spent on explicit sex equity provisions; $2.7 million on sex equity coordinators at state levels; $1.8 million on programs for displaced homemakers; $570,000 on support services for women; $250,000 on day care services; and $1.9 million on grants for assistance in overcoming sex bias.

Another important finding was that, out of all the states receiving federal funds, seven reported no expenditures on programs for displaced homemakers; 39 reported no expenditures for support services for women; 41 reported no expenditures for day care; and 25 reported no grants for assistance in overcoming sex bias. And, of the 54 states and territories that did hire sex equity coordinators, 24 spent less than the mandated $50,000. (States may carry over required expenditures to the following years.) Programs for displaced homemakers is the only other mandatory expenditure, though no amount is specified. Twenty-five states reported spending less than $10,000 in 1978-79 and West Virginia reported an expenditure of one dollar!

Of the legislative priorities related to sex equity, day care services received the least number of dollars. And two-thirds of that amount was spent by just two states, Texas and Wisconsin. Yet, these services may represent the greatest need in rural areas.

With so few expenditures, trying to trace the funds to rural districts would probably be futile. The results from the University

of California's survey of districts in 10 states show that only one in five districts reported any expenditures on sex equity, and only 5 percent of all high school districts surveyed indicated staffing changes in response to the law. Of the rural districts surveyed, only about one in ten reported any expenditures on sex equity.

Summary

Because of the scarcity of data on rural women in vocational education, it is difficult to discern any direct effect that the 1976 vocational education legislation may have had on them.

Enrollment of rural women in nontraditional programs of study is increasing slowly, but this could be a continuing trend of the last decade rather than a direct result of new legislation. There was no great leap forward once the new laws were enacted. In fact, few school districts initiated new programs in response to the sex equity provisions of the Vocational Education Act.

However, there is evidence of a growing rural awareness of sex discrimination and stereotyping; and there is also evidence of community-by-community progress toward equity. This progress, possibly influenced by the changing attitudes of local educators, may very well have been affected by the state policies and by the efforts of state sex equity coordinators. Thus, legislation may indeed be slowly achieving its purpose.

While opportunities for women are improving, the gap between men and women remains, as does the gap between rural and urban women, particularly in the programs offering high salaries. National data, though more detailed than ever before, are still of little use in looking at rural conditions, and current information is still inadequate for evaluating sex equity. Differences in local conditions, differences in intensity of training, and differences in outcomes still require study.

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Appendix

THE EDUCATION AMENDMENTS OF 1976: IMPACT ON WOMEN AND GIRLS CONCERNING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

On October 12, 1976 President Ford signed into law the Education Amendments of 1976 (Public Law 94-482). This law extends and revises the Vocational Education Act of 1963, the Higher Education Act of 1965, Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, and certain other federal education programs. The impact of the new legislation on women and girls is summarized by this paper. (For readers who wish to investigate the new law in depth, the text of the law is printed in the *Congressional Record* of Sept. 27, 1976 at page H11045. References to sections of the law are given in this memo in parentheses.* Alternatively, readers can obtain copies of the Education Amendments from their Congressional representatives.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Women achieved major breakthroughs in the revision of the Vocational Education Act. For the first time in educational program legislation, specific provisions regarding women's needs and concerns were written into the law

Background: The Vocational Education Act affects all three levels of government—national, state, and local. At the national level, the Act directs that the Office of Education conduct various types of studies, administer federal grants to states and private groups, and conduct various small scale and experimental research programs. At the state level, the Act authorizes "matching" grants to states for a variety of specific purposes. That is, the federal government offers a certain amount of money to each state (based on various aspects of the state's population) on the condition that the state provide some of its own money for the same purpose. The Act also mandates some requirements for intrastate distribution of vocational education funds and specifies administrative requirements for operating state programs. States in turn distribute grants and contracts to local educational agencies or private groups in accordance with state law

The revision of the Vocational Education Law by the Education Amendments of 1976 involves two major innovations First, the Act consolidates all vocational education categorical grants (except consumer and homemaking education and special programs for the disadvantaged) into a single block grant for the states, and streamlines the process by which states apply for federal funds in order to increase states' flexibility in using federal funds and to attempt to reduce paperwork. Eighty percent of a state's block grant is a "basic grant" and twenty percent is for "program improvement and supportive services." Within each of these two subcategories, states have discretion of spending money between specific alternatives. Second, the Act overhauls the method of state planning for the use of federal vocational education money and requires inclusion of a wider range of groups in the planning process.

The effective date of these changes in the vocational education law is fiscal year 1978 (October, 1977). A "Notice of Intent" (to publish proposed regulations), which outlines policy questions to be resolved in the regulations, can be found in the *Federal Register*. Individuals and organizations are encouraged to comment on these questions and on the proposed regulation which will be published subsequently, also in the *Federal Register*. Additionally, before the Act can be fully implemented, Congress will have to appropriate a specific amount of money for the revised Act. Persons wishing information about the status of appropriations should contact their Congressional representatives.

I. IMPACT ON NATIONAL PROGRAMS

At the national level, the revised Act includes several topics of importance to women.

- *Investigation of Sex Bias* (P.L. 94-482, sec. 523(a))

The Commissioner of Education is required to conduct an investigation of the extent to which sex discrimination and stereotyping exist in all vocational education programs assisted under the Vocational Education Act, and of the progress made in reducing or eliminating such discrimination and stereotyping in such programs, and in the occupations for which such programs prepare students. By October, 1978, the results of the study and recommendations are to be reported to Congress. This provision is important in establishing a baseline from which to measure progress and in identifying methods being used to eliminate sex bias and stereotyping.

- *Collection of Data on Vocational Students by Sex and Race* (P.L. 94-482, sec. 161(a)(1)(A))

The Commissioner of Education, in conjunction with the National Center for Educational Statistics, must develop a national vocational education data reporting system (by September 30, 1977) which includes, among other things, school enrollments by race and sex. To fulfill this provision, vocational schools and programs will probably be required by regulation to keep statistics on sex and race of students and to report these to the Commissioner. Women's groups are likely to press for simultaneous collection and reporting of the data *by race by sex*, i.e. black females, black males, white males, white females. Such data is viewed as crucial not only in determining the impact of the various programs on women and girls in general but also in evaluating the impact of such programs on minority females.

- *Awarding of Federal Contracts and Projects Grants Regarding Sex Bias* (VEA, sec. 171(a)(1))

The Commissioner is authorized to use 5% of the funds available under the authorization for state grants for contracts (and some grants) for various types of research and development of model programs, including those aimed at overcoming problems of sex stereotyping and bias in curriculum, guidance and testing materials, staff and teachers' attitudes and behavior (by means of in-service training), "if such activities are deemed to be of national significance by the Commissioner." Private groups as well as governmental bodies will in some instances be eligible to bid for these federal contracts.

- *Appointment of Women to the National Advisory Council and State Advisory Councils on Vocational Education* (VEA 105(a)(17) & (20); 162(a)(6) & (12))

These "citizen-watchdog" councils, appointed by the President to the National Council, and by state governors to the State Councils, often exercise significant influence on federal or state policy concerning the administration of programs. Women, including minority women, who are knowledgeable about sex discrimination problems in job hunting and employment are required to be appointed to the Councils. "Appropriate representation of both sexes" is also mandated. These legal requirements are important in order to remedy the chronic inadequate representation of women and minorities on such councils.

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* Since the Education Amendments of 1976 amend the Vocational Education Act of 1963 (VEA), cites to the latter are given where necessary to avoid confusion. P.L. 94-482 refers to the Amendments of 1976.

II. IMPACT AT THE STATE LEVEL

- *Mandate to States to End Sex Discrimination in Vocational Education* (VEA 101 (3))

Overcoming sex discrimination and stereotyping in vocational education programs is now included as one of the purposes of federally assisted state vocational education programs.

- *State Accountability* (VEA 107(b) (4) & 108(b) (1) (c) (ii))

State boards or agencies of vocational education must submit five year plans and annual plans, regarding use of federal funds to the Office of Education as a condition for receiving federal aid. In addition to other requirements, these plans must specify in detail state policies and procedures to assure equal access to programs by women and men, to overcome sex discrimination and stereotyping, and to encourage enrollment of women and men in non-traditional courses. The required annual program plan must also demonstrate compliance with the five year plan in all of these areas.

These provisions are crucial because they require states to consider and *act* on issues generally ignored in the past—the problem of equal access to all vocational education programs and the specialized needs of women students in light of past and sometimes continuing discrimination.

- *Equal Opportunity Personnel for Women's Concerns* (VEA 104(b) (1) & (2); 120(b) (1) (F); and 109(a) (3) (b))

States must designate some full-time personnel to "assist" the state board or vocational education agency in eliminating sex bias in programs. A minimum of $50,000 (with no matching requirement) is to be spent for this purpose, but states may also use part of the block grant to support additional full-time personnel. The duties of such personnel include collection and analysis of data on status of women as students and employees; monitoring grant distribution to insure that the needs and interests of women are addressed by projects assisted by the Act; monitoring programs for sex bias; developing remedies and recommendations to overcome sex bias, and disseminating information developed under this section concerning efforts to combat sex discrimination. Also, these personnel must be afforded the opportunity "to review" the state's five year plan and annual program plans

This provision requiring some personnel to focus on sex equality is crucial because the policy-makers of state boards or agencies have often paid little attention in the past to problems concerning sex discrimination/stereotyping in their programs The provision helps insure that women's issues and concerns will be identified and that policies and procedures to eliminate sex bias will be developed and emplemented.

- *Impact on Guidance and Counseling* (VEA 120(b) (1) (J); 134(a) (4); 134(a) (7), 133(a) (2))

Funds granted under the state's basic block grant may be utilized to provide counseling and job placement services for women who enter job training programs which are traditionally male. Under "Program Improvement and Supportive Services" (i e 20% of block grant), states must spend a minimum of 20% of the available funds on guidance programs which may include vocational resource centers to assist (among others) individuals out of school, seeking second careers, or entering the job market late in life, and in-service training for guidance counselors on non-sexist counseling and changing work patterns of women. Contracts awarded by the state may be for the development of non-sexist guidance and testing materials.

These provisions are necessary to change the attitudes and behavior of guidance counselors who are in a position to influence and encourage female students in setting their goals. Also, the provisions recognize the importance of supportive counseling for women dealing with sex bias in non-traditional occupations.

- *Revision of Curriculum* (VEA 133(a) (2); 131(a) (3))

States have the discretion to use funds from the block grant's subcategory "Program Improvement and Supportive Services" for awarding contracts to develop non-sexist curriculum. Also, research contracts may be awarded by state "research coordination units" to review and revise experimental curricula for any sex-role stereotyping.

- *Vocational Education for Adult Women* (VEA 120(b) (1) (L) 120(b) (1) (k)),

States have the discretion to use their block grants for vocational education programs for certain categories of individuals, including homemakers and part-time workers seeking full-time jobs, women trapped in traditional jobs but who desire non-traditional employment, single heads of household lacking adequate job skills, and divorced housewives who need employment. States may also use funds for day care services for children of students. These provisions are important because they recognize and support the legitimacy of education and training for adult women who have traditionally been short-changed by the education system.

- *Grants and Contracts to Overcome Sex Bias* (VEA 131(a) (2); 132(f))

Under the sub-category "Program Improvement" of the block grant, states have the discretion to award research contracts, and contracts for "exemplary and innovative" projects of specified types (e.g. focus on rural women and those people migrating from rural to urban areas) which are to give priority to reducing sex stereotyping.

Also, states may use federal funds to support activities which show promise of overcoming sex stereotyping and bias in vocational education.

- *Teachers and Other Staff* (VEA 135(a) (2))

States may use federal funds from the program improvement sub-category to support in-service training of teachers and other staff concerning the elemination of sex bias in vocational education programs. States may also award contracts for support services "designed to enable teachers to meet the needs of individuals enrolled in non-traditional job training programs."

- *Consumer and Homemaking Education*

Federal grants to states for this purpose must be used to support programs and services which encourage participation of both males and females to prepare for combining the roles of homemaker and wage earners. Sex stereotyping should be eliminated by developing curriculum materials which deal with equal opportunities laws, the changing career patterns of women, and men assuming homemaking responsibilities. Also, state programs should provide homemaking education programs for youth and adults not currently in school, such as school-age parents and single parents. These provisions are necessary to up-date homemaking education in terms of present day realities and to encourage boys/men as well as girls/women to view homemaking education as a necessary and valuable skill.

It is not clear whether states could choose to teach sex education as part of "family living and parenthood education," which states must include in the curriculum.

* * * * *

Source: National Advisory Council on Women's Educational Programs

II. Women in the Rural Economy: Employment and Self-Employment

by Ptarmigan Teal

The "reverse" migration of population and industry away from urban areas in the past 10 years has brought about a renewal of public attention to the welfare of America's rural communities.

Rural people welcome the return of their tax dollars but are less enthusiastic about the use of these monies for programs designed to solve rural problems, but spawned in urban centers. Studies show that rural Americans like to get by on their own. This suggests that, for rural development efforts to succeed, policymakers must be responsive to the unique value structures of rural people and aware of the peculiar characteristics indigenous to rural economies.

This chapter will contribute to the small pool of current research on rural women's participation in the labor market. Drawing on national statistics, it will explore the changing character of rural women's activities during the last decade, and it will evaluate the effect of these changes in terms of 1) income and individual reward (e.g., personal fulfillment through work and 2) complement to or conflict with traditional roles. The chapter will describe the cumulative effects of the multiple burdens of rural working wives/mothers/ homemakers and illuminate the social, economic, and geographic constraints on their productivity.

Because vocational education can make a major contribution to rural economies and rural women by strengthening self-employment capabilities, this chapter will highlight the activities of rural female entrepreneurs. It will assess the role of "micro-businesses" in rural economies in New England and, through case studies from Maine, Vermont, and Western Massachusetts, explore the experiences of rural women.

Qualitative and illustrative information is based on interviews and studies of rural women in New England, and on the author's experiences in growing up and working in this region.

This information should be of direct concern to rural educators who perceive vocational education as an instrument for economic devel-

opment. It will also be of interest to those in the field who are not yet aware of the magnitude of rural women's economic productivity as independent producers or as salaried workers.

Up to now, vocational programs have not been notably successful in preparing rural youth to assume economically productive roles in their communities. There are several possible explanations for this failure. One is the false assumption, upon which many programs are based, that the labor market has the capacity (or, in the case of women, the willingness) to absorb graduates into productive jobs.

Rural economies are generally simple, characterized by one or two major industries, either natural resource-based, nondurable manufacturing, or tourism. These industries depend on ample, reliable, and inexpensive supply of unskilled and semi-skilled workers to compensate for seasonal production and the economic cycles which these industries experience. In recent years, rural population growth and increasing female participation in the labor force have contributed to an even larger supply of workers in rural areas. Therefore, new graduates of vocational programs have little chance of obtaining jobs when they must compete with laid-off, experienced workers.

Also, incomplete labor market information has resulted in the modeling of rural vocational programs on urban programs designed to meet the needs of urban labor markets. As a result, rural youth often receive training in job-specific skills[1] for which there are no jobs. And the few local employment opportunities which do exist, require few if any of these skills.

Furthermore, the practice of designing programs in response to local industry often backfires because the need for those skills may no longer exist by the time graduation takes place.

Finally, research has found again and again that where job openings do occur, many employers prefer to do their own training, and they place no special value on the previous vocational training of a job applicant.[2]

This characterization of rural labor markets seems to suggest that there is little that vocational education programs can do to improve the economic opportunities of rural residents, particularly females. But this is not so. Vocational education can be involved in the economic development of rural communities by looking to another major sector of rural economies: small businesses and micro-businesses. It can contribute to the creation of jobs in this sector.

The economies of many rural areas are still made up of thousands of micro-businessess: cottage industries; one- or two-person service firms; low-volume and seasonal shops; labor-intensive manufacturing operations out of kitchens, barns, and sheds; small specialized mail-order outfits; artesans and crafters; and small-scale agriculture. Several recent studies show that micro-businesses are not only vital and active sectors of rural economies, but, in terms of economic de-

velopment and employment creation, are often more capital-efficient and more stable than medium-to-large scale industry and are primary sources for generating new jobs in the economy.[3]

In rural New England communities these enterprises, often supplementary-income or part-time operations, actually provide up to half the local employment opportunites. These jobs are usually close to or in the home and, while they may demand long hours, they are flexible and at the same time have the potential for providing moderate-to-good incomes. Many rural women already operate small enterprises, but their earnings are generally low. They have a substantial need for training in business skills that can improve their productivity.

Many other women who might benefit from self-employment are intimidated by a society which extolls the entrepreneurial spirit, but discourages women from exercising it outside the area of household management. These rural women can be encouraged and trained in technical, managerial, and entrepreneurial skills needed to marshall and develop rural resources to support businesses. They could then participate in this vital sector of rural economies, without compromising the traditional values which they genuinely espouse.

In the process of suggesting policy directions for vocational education, this study will summarize what is known about female entrepreneurship and extract what might be useful to vocational educators designing entrepreneurial development courses for rural women.

Rural Women in the Work Force

In the past 30 years there have been dramatic changes both in the number of rural women working outside the home and in the kinds of work they are doing. Women in the rural economy have intensified their activities as they have added new productive roles to their traditional ones or substituted jobs in the marketplace for other income-producing activities in the home. The same holds true for farmwomen still on the farm. The increased responsibilities and complexities of their lives make rural women one of the hardest working segments of the American population.[4] Yet little is known about the returns to rural women. Has the addition of a full- or part-time job to undiminished housework and other home-production activities (e.g., gardening, canning, sewing, and craftwork) brought net gains for women? Has the increased workload been necessary just to maintain a simple standard of living?

Labor Force Participation

Almost one-half of the 34 million rural women in the United States today are in the labor force, either working or looking for work. Rural women have increased their participation by 58 percent since 1960, when less than a third of all rural women were in the labor market.

The work pattern of rural women is clear in the table of labor force participation rates.(Table 2.1) Young unmarried or newly married women have high participation rates. Then, during their early child-bearing years (ages 25 to 34) their participation declines, only to pick up again after age 34, when those children are of school age.

During the seventies, slight decreases occurred in the labor force participation rates of rural women 55 to 64 years and in the late seventies for women 65 years and over. Early retirement, aided by Social Security and increased pension plans may be one reason for this decline. Another reason, perhaps more significant, is that women of this age have difficulty finding jobs in slack rural labor markets and, discouraged, they withdraw from the labor force. This "discouraged worker" effect, which amounts to a form of hidden unemployment, was evident in a 1975 survey of elderly women (60 years and over) in Maine. Three out of four of these women reported that they wanted jobs but were no longer looking for work (i.e., not in the labor force.[5]

TABLE 2.1

Labor Force Participation Rates by Age for Nonmetro Women, Selected Years

Age Group	Percent Women in Labor Force				
	1960	1970		1973	1978
14-17 yrs.	13.2	13.4	(16-19yr)	45.6	52.4
18-24	37.8	47.0	(20-24yr)	57.5	65.8
25-34	32.9	43.8		50.7	60.6
35-44	39.9	50.1		55.5	62.3
45-54	36.9	43.9		54.1	56.7
55-64				40.0	39.5
65 & over	9.2	9.2		9.6	8.9
TOTAL, NONMETRO	30.3	36.0		43.5*	48.0*
TOTAL METRO	36.2	40.8		45.4*	51.0*

* 16 years and over

Source: U.S. Census of Population, 1960 & 1970.

In fact, many rural women move in and out of the labor force regularly, a pattern which contributes to the underestimation of rural female employment. Yet, even with this underestimation, rural women's unemployment rate is generally higher than rural men's by several percentage points.

Rural women joined the labor market in large numbers for a variety of reasons. Economic pressures and inflation are the primary factors in the high participation rate of women with young children. The increase in employment opportunities for women in rural areas, generated by rural industrialization and population growth, has also attracted women to jobs outside the home. Higher levels of educational attainment have provided another incentive for labor-force participation by expanding options.

Rising rates of divorce and separation in rural areas, while lower than urban rates, also have contributed to the economic need for female heads-of-households to enter the labor market. In fact, one of the largest increases in labor force participation in the seventies occurred for women aged 16 to 24 years who were separated, divorced, or widowed.[6]

Another reason for greater participation is that not all rural women have the resources needed to supplement their family incomes with home production: gardening, preserving, keeping small livestock. Today, many rural women live on small lots or in apartments, where they are unable to grow crops or raise animals. In some cases traditional income-generating activities have apparently now matched the level of earnings possible in outside employment.

Finally, many rural women work outside the home for the personal fulfillment of work, the satisfaction derived from earning an independent income, and to break the isolation of "suburbanized" rural life. However, given the types of jobs most rural women take and the wages they receive, the rationale of "enjoyment or fulfillment" must be rarely invoked.

Occupation and Earnings

An available pool of low-wage unorganized labor in rural areas helped to precipitate the decentralization of manufacturing industries from urban to rural areas in the past two decades. This increase in manufacturing (and the concurrent population growth) also created a need for support industries which, in turn, greatly multiplied employment opportunities. And the growth in female employment has occurred primarily in the lowest paying jobs generated by this process: operative jobs in manufacturing, and clerical and service jobs in support industries.

Besides offering low wages, jobs in these sectors offer little advancement either in the acquisition of skills or increased earnings over time. The highly skilled or educated female workers in these jobs are not likely to be utilizing all their talents. In addition,

these occupations are highly sensitive to fluctuations in the economy due to seasonal slowdowns, national economic recession, or international competition. This latter is particularly true in the nondurable goods manufacturing industries in which many rural women are employed. The lack of job security in sharply fluctuating industries is reflected in consistently high unemployment rates for women in sharply fluctuating industries.

The pattern of job segregation in rural areas has confined women to the relatively few traditionally "female" occupations. Actually, despite women's efforts to enter new and nontraditional fields, there has been an overall increase of women's concentration in clerical and service jobs in the past 20 years. In 1960, 36.5 percent of all nonmetro women worked in clerical and service occupations. In 1978, 48.7 percent worked in these occupations. (See Table 2.2)

In Maine, during the 4 years from 1973 to 1977, female employment in the state's highest paying industry, paper manufacturing, increased from 10 percent of the work force to 12.6 percent. Women brought into this traditionally male industry, however, were given the lowest paying jobs such as clerks and unskilled laborer. The high paying craftsworker jobs were reserved for men -- in fact the proportion of women craftsworkers actually fell from 5.1 percent in 1970 to 0.6 percent by 1976. Nor was this phenomenon unique to the paper industry: during this same period (1970-1976) there was a strengthening of male domination in the high-paying craftsworker categories in almost all industries, particularly in the manufacture of paper, in public utilities, and in the construction industry.[7]

Because women's labor force activities are concentrated in so few occupations, rising female labor force participation rates have had the effect of lowering the average wage in these already low-paying occupations. In fact, between 1969 and 1976, the average earnings of all employed nonmetro women declined from $5315 to $5120, this during a period when the value of the dollar also decreased.

The availability of part-time jobs in "female" occupations has also contributed to nonmetro women's lower earnings and to higher concentration in these jobs. Yet only 31 percent of nonmetro working women work part-time, and many of these do so involuntarily: they cannot find full-time work, or their hours are reduced by production cutbacks. In Vermont, for example, fully 5 percent of the female work force is in this situation.[8]

Another example of the effect of women's entry into the labor force occurred in the professional and managerial occupations. From 1969 to 1976, a look at nonmetro female employment gains in this sector might imply corresponding gains in earnings. However, the opposite effect was produced: average earnings declined by 8.5 percent in professional occupations and by 17.3 percent in managerial occupations.[9] One effect of women's high rate of participation in rural labor markets in the 1970's, then, has been to reduce average earnings in occupations which were traditionally high status, male posi-

TABLE 2.2

Occupational Distribution of Nonmetro Women by Percentage

Occupational Category	Percent of Women in Labor Force in Nonmetro Areas 1978	1970	1960
Total Number	12,012,000	6,886,000	5,238,000
Professional/ Technical	13.3	13.7	13.2
Managers/ Administration	5.5	3.7	4.0
Sales	6.0	6.3	8.1
Clerical	28.5	24.3	20.7
Craftsmen	2.1	1.9	1.0
Operatives	15.1	17.7	16.9
Transportation	0.8	-	-
Labor, Non-farm	1.6	1.3	0.6
Private Household	3.7	5.3	10.6
Service	20.2	18.2	15.8
Farms & Farm Managers	0.8	0.6	1.6
Farm Labor & Foremen	2.3	1.2	3.3

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture: O'Leary, "The Changing Role of Women in the Rural Economy," and Brown and O'Leary, "Labor Force Activity of Women in Metropolitan and Nonmetropolitan America," Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1979.

tions. "Cheap" women workers have been substituted for high-paid male labor.

During the 1970's, the gap in earnings between men and women widened nationally, with women's earnings equally three-fifths of men's.[10] However, nonmetro women's average earnings were roughly half or less than half those of nonmetro men in all occupational groups (Table 2.3), indicating that the disparity was wider for rural incomes.[11]

Furthermore, in 1976, economic data showed that increased educational attainment levels had little economic value for rural women remaining in rural areas (Table 2.4). A white male with 4 years of high school earned two and a half times more than a white female with the same education. In a more extreme example, the average earnings of a white female with 4 years of college education was actually less than that earned by a male with fewer than 8 years of school. Nonmetro black males fared better than white females with the same amounts of education, but black females earned least of all per year of education unless they had been to college. These figures have important implications for those who advocate greater educational opportunities for rural women, for clearly there is no shortage of highly educated female talent in rural areas.

Returns For Their Labors

Changing social and economic forces during the past twenty years have brought rural women flooding into the labor market. Interest in increasing female employment opportunities suggests that it might be useful to examine the effects on rural women's lives of their growing involvement in the labor force. Are they and their families better off for it? How do they feel about their work?

Productivity and Income

Much as been said about the changing role of women in the economy, with the implicit assumption that women are moving from nonproductive to productive roles in our nation's economic system. For many rural women however, there has simply been a substitution of extra-market economic activity for labor market activity. In the case of the farmwoman who holds an off-farm job while continuing her farm and domestic work, it is a multiplication of her productivity; but the value of the resulting products has not yet been adequately measured.

In the nation as a whole, the working wife's contribution in wages to total family income has actually declined from 26.8 percent in 1959 to 26.1 percent in 1978.[12] The increasing differential between men's and women's earnings is partially responsible for this decline, but the increase in women's full-time labor force participation should more than account for this effect.

The financial contributions of working wives is of crucial impor-

TABLE 2.3

Mean Earnings of Nonmetro Persons 16 Years and Older Employed 50-52 Weeks, 1976

Occupation Category	Total Amount Earned Per Year, Dollars		
	Male	Female	Percent Female
Professional/ Technical	13,812	7,484	54
Managers/ Administrators	13,339	5,928	44
Sales	10,646	3,823	36
Clerical	9,484	5,299	56
Crafts	10,013	5,493	55
Operatives	8,543	4,898	57
Transportation/ Equipment Operators	8,904	1	-
Labor	6,313	1	-
Services	6,934	3,521	51
Private Household	1	1,654	-
Farms & Farm Managers	8,858	1	-
Farm Labor/ Supervisory	4,025	1	-

1 Figures not available; data base less than 75,000 persons.

Source: Bureau of the Census

TABLE 2.4

Mean Earnings of Persons in Nonmetro Areas 25 Years and Older, by Race and Education, 1976

School Years Completed	White		Black	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
ELEMENTARY				
Less than 8	$6,541	$3,131	$4,580	$2,225
8	7,911	3,661	5,845	2,684
HIGH SCHOOL				
1 - 3	9.831	4,068	6,251	3,144
4	11,981	4,998	7,778	4,726
COLLEGE				
1 - 3	13,048	5,134	1	5,348
4	15,672	6,471	1	1
5 or more	18,267	9,681	1	1

1 Figures not available; data base less than 75,000

Source: Fratoe, Frank. "Rural Women and Education," Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1979.

tance, especially if it raises family income above the poverty level ($6,191 in 1977). In 1977, for example, 5 percent of all rural families in which both husband and wife worked had incomes below $7000 while 18 percent of rural families in which the wife did not work had incomes below $7000. It appears that women's entry into the labor market has been essential to keep their families above the poverty level during the past decade of high inflation.

However, the increase in rural women's earnings in the labor market has not raised rural standards of living if inflation is taken into account. Although more than 2 million women have joined the work force during the 5-year period from 1974 to 1978, the proportion of the rural population living below the poverty level remained constant. Median family income dropped in real terms by 21 percent.[13]

With regard to individual earnings, there have certainly been positive benefits to rural women in having personal incomes. It is important to remember, however, that because of the great numbers of women who have entered the rural labor force, wage levels have fallen. Returns for women's labor have declined both in absolute and, more dramatically, in real terms since 1970.[14] In fact, though women from 22 to 44 years of age have been the most frequent new entrants into the work force, the proportion of rural women in this age group living below the poverty level has increased from one-quarter in 1970 to one-third in 1977.

Rural job markets are limited in the range of job options they offer, and those opportunities that do exist, are primarily reserved for rural men. For this reason, young women in the past migrated to urban areas to pursue their careers. This trend has diminished, however, and women who now remain in rural areas must find work within the limited range of low-level occupations open to them: clerical, service, and operative. For those rural women who do seek work that is self-fulfilling, this reality must be frustrating. "It is the rare woman," muses Dunne, "who finds self-actualization in eviscerating chickens in a chicken-packing plant."[15]

The labor markets to which rural women have access are usually structured on the demand side rather than the supply side. This is due to the ample supply of women workers and their attachment to their communities and to their husbands' work location. The employer can hold what amounts to a reserve of female workers who can be hired or discharged in response to production needs. Unemployment insurance makes it easier for an industry to expand and contract its workforce. Laid-off women workers will hang around waiting to be recalled, or will temporarily withdraw from the labor force. Because of the nature of the jobs they hold, rural women are less likely than their male counterparts to have seniority systems, unions, or permanent attachments to an employer. Thus, rural women's work experiences tend to be low-paying and highly unstable, both of which cause anxiety and insecurity.

Aspirations vs. Reality

A look at some of the research done on rural female youths' career aspirations may shed light on their chances for personal fulfillment by their work experiences.

The Dunne et al study of high school students in five rural regions of the country found that young females look forward to working, before and during marriage, as a source of personal satisfaction.

When asked how they felt about combining work and marriage, the majority said they wanted to work outside the home, regardless of economic necessity. (Their male peers, it should be pointed out, were not nearly as enthusiastic about working wives, an attitude which has a substantial influence on rural women's labor activities.)

The females planned to stay at home while their children were of preschool age, unless economic necessity compelled them to work, and work part-time thereafter. Despite their work plans, these young women intended to preserve child rearing and homemaking tasks for themselves. This combination of "modern" and "traditional" roles is a common pattern among rural working women and has had the effect of doubling their work load.[16]

The vast majority of females in this study had post-high school educational expectations.[17] Four years later, however, it was found that half of them had ended their education with high school. For many, marriage and children had interrupted their plans, and more women than had expected ended up as housewives. Did this occur because of voluntarily changed plans, or because upon graduating from high school these young rural women faced limited educational and occupational choices?

Double (Triple?) Burden

The lives of working women in rural areas seem much more difficult than for urban working women. Public local transportation is almost nonexistent in rural areas, and many women do not have cars of their own (and apparently many do not know how to drive.)[18] Besides the difficulties entailed in depending on husbands or friends in order to get to work, this lack of flexibility makes shopping, access to other services (such as medical and banking), and transporting children very time-consuming.

Child care is a major problem facing rural women who need or want to work. "Extended family" members who once took care of the children of working mothers either no longer live nearby or have entered the labor force themselves.[19] The absence of day-care arrangements and after-school programs severely limits rural mothers' flexibility in pursuing work opportunities. Often informal child-care arrangements are made which, when they break down, temporarily force the mother to stay home from work; and she is easily replaced.

Most rural women feel genuinely and fervently that their primary roles are as homemaker and mother. Numerous studies, surveys, and interviews have made it clear that rural women feel that the home and family are their responsibilities and their top priorities. They are not clamoring for men to share these responsibilities, nor do they curtail the responsibilities when they enter the labor force. As Dunne and others have emphasized, rural working women have taken on one more job in addition to their jobs as homemakers, wives, and mothers (and in some cases farm workers.)[20]

The continuation of this attitude is carefully passed on to rural girls. Interviews with rural women in Vermont showed that, while mothers are proud of their daughters' career accomplishments, their hopes are that these same daughters are strongly family-oriented.[21] They feel it is good that women are working, but only if there are no obligations at home. This conviction was expressed by a farmwife with seven children: "Some women have to go out to work who should be able to stay at home with their families. The government should subsidize these women with a minimum income so they can raise their kids."

In fact, many rural women -- whether they work to support the family, to maintain living standards with a second income, or for personal independence -- find themselves in a moral dilemma over the effect their outside work has on their performance as traditional wife/mother/homemaker. And the resistance of their husbands, even in the face of financial need, can be a source of tension that only adds to the multiple burdens which women carry.

The interviews with Vermont women brought out the inner turmoil women are experiencing over this issue as many begin to see the absolute necessity of working outside the home to add to family income. Faced with the declining value of their husbands' earnings, many women in the sample decided to stick it out through ingenious frugality until, with their children in school, they could take part-time jobs. One young woman with four children, after looking at the lives of working mothers in her community, decided she would rather "just barely get by" than seek a job.

Most of those who do work, seek part-time work until their children are fully grown. But even they expressed tremendous ambivalence about whether they ought to be working at all. One mother who has worked part-time at the phone company for many years, "to take financial pressure off her husband," reported feeling constant guilt during her working hours.

Rural women have always supplemented the family income, and there is no queasiness about having to share that responsibility. It has just become very difficult for women to do it these days. This was expressed by one 62-year-old Vermont woman who has been a storekeeper and post-mistress, has taken in washing and ironing, and now canes chairs and sells Stanley products to earn money (she has also been town clerk and Justice of the Peace):

> The wife has to do something for an income to help her husband — just for the basics, like appliances. I don't see how a man can support a family alone unless the woman is a really good seamstress or something. The days when a woman could preserve enough food to get through are gone. Especially when so many live in apartments. I don't know how they could swing it.[22]

In sum, the phenomenal increase in rural women's participation

in the labor force does not appear to have yielded many postitive returns. Rural poverty has not decreased. The buying power of the average rural family's income has dropped by one-fifth, suggesting that, if women had not joined the work force in great numbers, the population living in poverty would have grown substantially.

For the individual working woman, average wages have decreased in real dollars, and the difference between her income and her husbands' (brothers' or boyfriends') income has increased. As we have already pointed out, job security is limited and unemployment is high for rural women. The jobs themselves offer little advancement and teach few skills useful elsewhere.

Rural working women are anxious about their ability to perform their wife/mother/homemaker roles according to the standards that their mothers held -- in addition to holding their jobs. The frequent lack of support from husbands only adds to the multiple burdens which rural women carry.

Some of the Vermont women had embryonic ideas about earning an income while freeing themselves from some of the burden and anxiety of holding a job: through self-employment. That they had no idea about how to achieve this status was evident. One woman, who worked part time in a shop, wanted to open a fabric/craft store but did not know how to proceed. Another young woman with a beautician's license feared she did not have the business acumen to operate her own shop. A farmwife who had five children and who worked full-time as a school cook (including planning, budgeting, and buying) was aware that some of her skills might be in demand in her community, but she did not know how to explore or assess the market.

There were women among these Vermonters who were self-employed, some in partnership with their husbands, some independently, and many on a part-time basis. Their activities included: commission work for the woolen mills, babysitting, washing and ironing, sewing, wallpapering, drilling wells, salvaging junk metal, selling fish tackle, raising flowers and making dried arrangements, writing for the newspaper, hairdressing, decorating cakes, training horses, selling Tupperware, crocheting and knitting, doing freelance photography, and, of course, farming. The self-assurance these women displayed in the interviews, and the immense diversity of their activities warrant a further examination of this group of rural women who work for themselves and are generally overlooked by vocational educators.

Self-Employed Women

A larger number of women workers in this country are self-employed. Little is known about what they are doing, but their numbers are growing. The following is a brief discussion of what is known about self-employed women, and a thorough discussion of one group of rural women who have a long tradition of self-employment: farmwomen.

Self-employed women are generally older than women working for wages and salaries (see Table 2.5), which is indicative of the greater experience and maturity ordinarily required to run their own businesses or careers.[23] Advanced education is not a prerequisite to entrepreneurship: two-thirds of all the self-employed women interviewed had 12 years or less education; one-tenth had 8 years or less.

More working women are choosing self-employment as a means to earn their living, and they have made considerable inroads into traditionally masculine provinces of self-employment. However, the disparity between sexes in self-employment earnings is substantial: self-employed men's earnings were three times those of self-employed women in 1977.[24] The number of self-employed women has grown by a quarter of a million since 1971, a much faster rate of growth than that of

TABLE 2.5

Self-Employed Women, by Age, 1979

Age	Nonagricultural Industries		Agriculture	
	Number (Thousands)	Percent	Number (Thousands)	Percent
Total	1,989	100.0	186	100.0
16-19	42	2.1	1	0.5
16-17	23		-	
18-19	19		1	
20-24	129	6.4	9	4.8
25-34	455	22.9	41	22.0
35-44	480	24.1	35	18.8
45-54	446	22.4	59	31.7
55-64	286	14.4	23	12.4
55-59	191		13	
60-64	95		10	
65 and up	151	7.6	18	9.6

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment and Earnings, Washington, D.C.: GPO, August 1979.

self-employed men (Table 2.6). In 1971, 20 percent of all self-employed workers were women; in 1979, women made up 25 percent of the total. Increased demands in the more female-intensive service and trade industries have drawn many women into entrepreneurship. (The shift from small owner-operated businesses to corporate ownership has contributed to the lack of increase for men.)

Eighty-seven percent of the self-employed women in non-agricultural industries in 1979 were in service industries and retail trade (Table 2.7). In the service industries, close to one-third were in personal services (operating beauty shops, laundries, child care facilities, etc.). One-sixth were in professional services (e.g., medical enterprises, such as nursing homes; social services; accounting; architecture; educational services).

Over one-third of all self-employed service workers are women, but within this industry they dominate the personal services category, making up 69 percent of the total. In professional services, where 30.5 percent are women, their presence is strongest in educational services. More than one-third of the self-employed are in the Other Services category, which includes recreation businesses and operating hotels and other lodging places.[25] Of all self-employed workers in retail trade, women accounted for 38.6 percent, and for 22.6 percent of all self-employed workers in the finance, insurance, and real estate fields.

Because of the definition of self-employment, these figures do not portray a fully accurate picture of women in business for themselves. First, an individual must be primarily self-employed to be classified in this category. Therefore, entrepreneurial activities in addition to primary vocations -- either gainful or homemaking -- are not included. (Ruth Finney mentions this discrepancy in statistics on Hawaii where there are 12,832 "self-employed" people, yet there are more than 90,000 excise tax licenses.[26] Second, the U.S. Bureau of the Census in 1972, reported that there were over 400,000 women-owned businesses in the United States, but approximately 1.5 million self-employed women,[27] a differential which can be attributed only partly to partnerships, non-reporting of business income, etc. This definition of self-employment excludes all those women who have formed corporations who are counted as salaried workers and all women in agriculture and professional services.

While these definition problems very likely lead to underestimates of women's entrepreneurial activities, self-employment among women still increased by over 53 percent from 1971 to 1979, three times the rate of growth among men.[28]

Farmwomen: Self-Employment in Agriculture

Female self-employment in agriculture and agricultural industries more than doubled in the 1970's, while male self-employment in this sector barely increased. In 1979, there were 186,000 women in this category, the majority of whom were farm residents. However, we

TABLE 2.6

Self-Employment in Rural Areas, Thousands

	1979	1978	1977	1974	1971
Total Number of Males & Females:	8,621	8,157	7,575	7,386	7,057
Non-Agricultural :	6,935	6,515	6,141	5,634	*
Agricultural :	1,686	1,642	1,434	1,752	*
Number of Females :	2,175	1,933	1,774	1,545	1,419
Percent :	25.2	23.7	23.4	20.9	20.1
Number of Females:					
Non-Agricultural :	1,989	1,776	1,682	1,438	*
Percent :	28.7	28.2	27.4	25.5	*
Unpaid Female Family Workers :	468	*	*	456	*
Number of Females:					
Agricultural :	186	157	92	107	*
Percent :	11.0	9.5	6.4	6.1	*
Unpaid Female Family Workers :	295	253	*	257	*
Percent Female Labor Force Self-Employed :	6.3	5.0	4.8		

*Not Available

Source: NATIONAL FEDERATION OF INDEPENDENT BUSINESS, NFIB Fact Book on Small Business; Feb. 1979, Washington, D.C..

Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1975 Handbook on Women Workers.. U.S. Department of Commerce, 1975, Table A-23.

Waldman and McEddy, Monthly Labor Review. U.S. Department of Labor.

Current Population Reports, P-27, No. 52. U.S. Department of Commerce.

TABLE 2.7

Distribution of Non-farm, Self-Employed Rural Workers, by Industry and Sex, 1978

Total Non-Farm Self-Employed: 6,305,000

Female	Females in Industry	Male
1,774,000	(28.2%)	4,524,000

Industry	Percent of Females	Number	Percent	Percent of Males	Number
Mining, Construction, & Manufacturing	4.8	85,248	6.1	29.2	1,322,468
Transportation, & Public Utility	1.1	19,536	8.1	4.9	221,921
Wholesale Trade	1.4	24,864	10.5	4.7	212,863
Retail Trade	32.4	575,424	38.6	20.2	914,858
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	5.0	88,800	22.6	6.7	303,443
Services	55.2	980,352	38.8	34.2	1,548,918
Business and Rep.	6.1	108,336	17.1	11.6	525,364
Personal	28.7	509,712	69.2	5.0	226,450
Professional	16.6	294,816	30.5	14.8	670,292
Education	6.6	117,216	83.8	0.5	22,645
Other	10.0	177,600	21.5	14.3	647,647
Other Services	3.9	69,264	35.3	2.8	126,812

Source: U.S. Department of Labor

should also pay attention to the women in the "unpaid family worker" category. The definition of an unpaid family worker is one who works 15 hours or more per week without pay on a family farm or in the family agricultural business. Approximately 60 percent of employed female farm residents fell into this category in 1979.[29] Because farming is a family enterprise, it is fair to assume that those women are also self-employed.

This assumption is supported by the literature on farmwives' involvement in agricultural enterprise.[30] In fact, as sociologist Elise Boulding points out, 15 hours per week is a significant underestimation of the time farmwomen devote to farmwork.[31] Boulding cites a 1964 Census survey which reports farmwives working 19.9 hours per week as an annual average. Boulding estimates 41 hours of farm tasks per week (in addition to 58 hours of "home tasks", and not including off-farm work or side-enterprises).

Only 43 percent of all farmwomen are in the labor force according to the 1978 Census of Farm Population[32] -- either self-employed or salaried, or as unpaid family workers. Is it possible that 57 percent of all farmwomen do no work of any kind beyond a couple of hours per day on the farm, especially when less than half of all farmers in the United States are full-time farmers? Barring elves at night, women must be picking up a substantial portion of the work that men are no longer doing!

One factor which undoubtedly skews federal labor force statistics on this subject -- and strongly reflects rural women's attitudes -- is the lack of distinction that farmwives make between "work" and the rest of their activities. A 53-year-old dairy farmwife in Vermont, when asked whether she worked, easily answered no. When asked how she spent each day, it turned out that she did the milking with her husband in the morning and evening, including cleaning the milking equipment (a laborious and time-consuming jobs), did all the farm accounts, and spent half of the rest of her day doing other farm chores. the integration of "farm" work and "domestic" work often makes it impossible to separate the two. Is cooking for twenty people at harvest time domestic or farm work? Is time spent selling calves in town on the food-shopping trip domestic or farm work?

The farm work that Boulding's farmwives reported included field and barn work, kitchen gardening, bookkeeping, veterinarian duties, and general "coordinating." Most farmwives do all the financial recordkeeping, an increasingly complex task considering the capital intensiveness of many farms, the multiple credit requirements, sources and means of payment, and subsidies; some women have turned to computerized bookkeeping. Productivity records are also an important task. On a dairy farm, for example, careful records are kept on the relationship between feed consumption and milk production. The paperwork required for animal registration whenever a new animal is born is another time-consuming chore.

Further evidence of farmwives' high degree of business involve-

ment with the farm is that they also report reading farm journals for technical and managerial innovations to pass on to their partners in farming. Indeed, if the need arose, 20 of 26 farmwives interviewed by Boulding felt they could take over management of the farm. This high managerial self-confidence was also expressed by the farmwomen in Stoler's Vermont sample. More than 74,000 women in the United States own and operate farms, either because they have chosen this profession for themselves or because the farms have been left to them.

Farmwomen's Part-time Enterprises

Besides helping to run the farm, most farmwives have other income-earning enterprises. All the farmwives in Boulding's study had either a) on-farm enterprises which were the women's own, but which used farm products, or b) enterprises which were operated on or off the farm, but which did not use farm products.

The first category involved the further processing of farm products such as fruits, vegetables, wool, sheepskins, and maple sugar. These products were sold on the farm, at roadside stands, in local stores, wholesale, or by mail order. The farmwomen kept accounts of these enterprises separate from other farm accounts. Earnings were used to bolster the cash flow of the main farm enterprise, or to buy family necessities.

Enterprises in the second category -- those not using farm products -- included an infinite variety of activites. Newspaper and magazine writing, auctioneering, many varieties of craft production, sewing, babysitting, performing as musicians, shopkeeping, and hairdressing are among them.

It is more than coincidental that all 26 of the women Boulding interviewed were engaged in one of these activities or were employed off the farm, casting significant doubt on the statistics that 57 percent of farm women are economically idle.

The information on female self-employment, particularly on farmwives' enterprises, gives us a sense of the amount and nature of entrepreneurial activity among rural women. The low earnings of self-employed women, and their concentration in only two industries, suggest that educational and technical assistance could enable self-employed women to further develop their businesses.

The labor-force statistics on self-employment have not been specific about rural women's business activities; there is no nonmetro breakdown in statistics on self-employment. The following section, then, gives a detailed description of small women-owned businesses in rural New England and is based on local research done in three different parts of New England. Particular atention is paid to the needs of the women running these small enterprises, needs which can be met by innovative vocational education programs.

Before concentrating on New England, for comparative purposes we will look at the characteristics of all women-owned businesses.

The first survey of women-owned businesses, conducted in 1972 by the U.S. Department of Commerce, gives a partial view of female entrepreneurial activity in the United States.[33] The survey counted 402,025 women-owned firms that were sole-proprietorships, and 87 percent of them had no paid employees. It is these one-women operations which more closely characterize the small independent enterprises most frequently found in rural areas.

According to this survey, in 1972, these one-woman enterprises averaged $10,000 in gross receipts, though more than half grossed less than $5,000 that year. Women's business activities were heavily concentrated in services and in retail trade industries, which together accounted for 71 percent of the total number of firms. Of these women-owned businesses, eating and drinking places, miscellaneous retail establishments, food stores, automotive dealers and gas stations, special trade contractors in construction, business services, hotels and other lodging places earned the most money. These concentrations of women's business activities compare favorably with other available data on self-employed women, though the data are crude.

Women-Owned Business in Nonmetropolitan Areas

The 1972 survey of women's businesses did not identify nonmetro firms, nor did it include the least populated rural counties in the United States. However, it did provide data on all counties in the nation in which they found 100 or more women-owned businesses in rural areas. I have extracted from the survey all available data on the nonmetro counties in northern New England and northeastern New York.

The sum of these statistics, as mentioned previously, gives only a very partial view of rural women's business activities. The data were derived from IRS business tax returns and Social Security Administration records, and therefore exluded all those women entrepreneurs who did not file returns or pay into Social Security. Because of the scale and nature of many rural women's entrepreneurial activities, a large number of women may belong in this category. Most important to our review of rural women's business ownership, the data did not include agricultural production operations (though self-employment figures told us something about women's activities in this industry). Nor did the survey include legal services, physicians, dentists, and other health-related services. Finally, the issue of legal ownership versus real ownership and operation arises because, similar to farm operations, there are many husband-wife businesses in which the wives view themselves as co-owners. They do much of the running and managing of the businesses but are not listed as legal co-

owners. This phenomenon contributes to the underestimation of rural women's entrepreneurial activity.

One-woman Enterprises in Northern New England.

The 28 nonmetroplitan counties in northeastern states -- Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, northeastern New York, and northwestern Massachusetts -- had a total of 4,259 women-owned firms with average receipts per firm of $17,890.[34] Because we are concerned with the individual female entrepreneurs in small firms, we will focus on the firms with no employees. There were 3,746 of these one-woman enterprises, or 88 percent of the total number of firms in the 28 counties. (This proportion of firms with no employees to total number of firms is the same for the nation. See Table 2.8)

These women earned more than $40 million, averaging $10,720 per firm, which is actually 7 percent higher than the national average for firms in the same size category. However, earnings varied widely between counties. Women-owned firms in Massachusetts averaged only $7,930, while firms in northeastern New York had the highest average earnings, $11,870 per firm. New York's high average may be due to a very large proportion of firms in retail trade, the industry sector with highest average earnings. Other major differences between states were due to such factors as the higher percentages of women in finance, insurance, and real estate in New Hampshire and Vermont, than in other areas, as evidenced in Table 2.8.

The greater income levels for nonmetro businesses with no employees compared to the national average may be due to the differences in the industrial composition of the businesses. The 28 nonmetro counties have a somewhat larger concentration of women in the construction, manufacturing, transportation, and utilities industries, all of which have high average earnings per firm. On the other hand, there is a significantly larger proportion of firms in the low-earning service industries in the nonmetro counties as compared to the nation: 42 percent versus 38.4 percent. There are also more women in the retail trade industry and fewer in finance, insurance, and real estate.

The nonmetro firms were also compared to the same size category in eight northern New England metropolitan areas. Once again, nonmetro earnings were higher. Average receipts for firms with no employees in the New England metropolitan areas were $10,594, or $126 (1.2 percent) less than nonmetro firms. Perhaps the income difference is a result of more business reporting in metropolitan areas (thus a greater number of very small firms would be represented). On the other hand, maybe rural women are just more successful entrepreneurs!

In comparing nonmetro women-owned firms with the women-owned firms in the nation as a whole, we find that the one-woman business with no employees in rural New England is far from marginal. In fact, it appears to have done slightly better than its urban counterparts.

TABLE 2.8

Women-Owned Firms Without Paid Employees, Northeastern Nonmetro Counties [1] With 100 or more Women-Owned Firms, 1972: Distribution by Industry and Earnings

	Number	Construction	Manufacturing	Transportation & Utilities	Wholesale Trade	Retail Trade	Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	Selected Services	Other Industry (2)	Industries Not Classified	Gross Receipts	Average Receipts
		Percent										
Maine (7 counties)	1128	4.2	2.0	2.3	0.6	31.6	4.0	41.1	7.6	6.4	$12,117,000	$10,740
New Hampshire (6 counties)	650	4.0	2.5	3.1	0.5	30.3	8.0	42.5	1.5	7.7	6,179,000	9,500
Vermont (6 counties)	786	5.1	2.3	1.9	0.1	28.9	10.4	40.8	1.4	8.5	8,308,000	10,570
Northeastern New York (8 counties)	1059	2.9	1.1	1.3	0.6	37.6	4.9	43.9	1.8	5.7	12,571,000	11,870
Massachusetts (1 county)	123	4.9	4.1	6.5	0.1	30.1	4.1	39.0	1.6	8.9	975,000	7,930
Total (28 counties)	3746	4.0	2.0	2.2	0.6	32.5	6.3	42.0	3.4	7.0	$40,150,000	10,720
All Women-Owned (3) Firms, U.S.	100%	3.7	2.0	1.7	1.2	33.1	9.2	37.5	1.9	9.3		10,017

1 Only counties with at least 100 women-owned firms are included.
2 Other Industries include agricultural services, forestry and fishing, hunting and trapping.
3 Without paid employees.

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce

In other respects, such as industrial composition, nonmetro businesses parallel all women-owned businesses.

One major difference between urban and rural businesses is the latter's lack of visibility, causing them to be virtually ignored by all government units from the local to the federal level. This oversight has resulted in a general lack of knowledge about the number of rural microbusinsses, the number of rural female entrepreneurs, the nature of these small enterprises, and, particularly, their contribution to rural economies in terms of both employment opportunities and income possibilities.

Case Studies

Some efforts have been made to fill the gap in knowledge about small or microbusinesses in rural areas. Drawing on several case studies in New England, the following is a profile of rural businesses; who are involved, what they are doing, their role in rural economies, with specific attention to the problems women owners have which are relevant to vocational educators.

The Hilltowns of Western Massachusetts

There is a tradition of independent subsistence activity in New England. It is reflected in the surprising results of both the survey and the work with small-scale entrepreneurs in nine rural towns in the foothills of the Berkshires in western Massachusetts. These towns are known locally as the Hillstowns.[35] They range in size from populations of 335 to 2,300; the total population for the area is just over 9,000, representing a 16.5 percent increase over 1970. The high growth rate is due to the rapid extension of academic institutions with their related support industries, and to some growth in manufacturing in the Connecticut River Valley below.

On a drive through these beautiful Hilltowns -- once the site of hundreds of mills driven by ample hydropower, manufacturing a wide range of exports, and a major sheep-wool industry -- the signs of economic activity are sparse. The area businesses now consist of some general stores, gas stations, small package stores, a building supply store, roadside stands selling fruits, vegetables, and maple sugar products, antique shops, a small ski area, a restaurant and motel, campgrounds, a craftsperson, a chain saw dealer, and a real estate agent. And one cannot miss the huge logging trucks crowding the roads, nor the few small dairy farms which remain. However, some towns do not have even a grocery store, and one town has no post office. From all appearances, the Hilltowns are typically sleepy, rural towns. In fact, the State Department of Employment Security was aware of only 114 businesses in the area; Dun and Bradstreet listed 156 firms. The failure of government and other reporting sources to provide an accurate picture of small-scale independent economic activity was made clear when the Hilltown Project undertook to list and then survey all Hilltown enterprises.[36]

By using town street lists and the knowledge of local residents about their neighbors' activities, the Hilltown Project compiled a list of 545 enterprises; 55 others had not yet been discovered. In May 1979, a survey was mailed to 350 of these businesses, not including agricultural occupations. The 84 businesses responding provided employment for 428 people on a full-time year-round basis. This averages out to more than five full-time jobs per business. When part-time year-round workers were included, the average rose to seven jobs per business, or 581 total. Another 73 full-time and part-time seasonal jobs were provided, as well.

The 405 non-agricultural enterprises, then, employed (or self-employed) approximately 2,175 people, of which 87 percent were Hilltown residents. Therefore, 1,892 jobs were provided by these small businesses. In fact, with the addition of individuals employed in agriculture, all of whom were Hilltown residents, about half the total labor force of the nine towns found employment in local businesses.

What did the survey tell us about women business owners? Ninety percent of the responding Hilltown businesses were individually or family owned and 10 percent were corporations. Of these, 60 percent were owned by men, 26 percent by women, and 14 percent by couples. In other words, 40 percent were wholly- or half-owned by women. Among the women's businesses represented in the sample were: a 100-year-old family-operated tool handle manufacturer, an excavating and trucking firm, a dog kennel, an antique and gift shop, a perennial flower farm, a toymaker, a real estate company, a day-care center, a general store, a Christmas tree grower, a stained glass artist, and a wood-burning stove dealer. Crafts were produced by 54 of the women entrepreneurs.

Some of the major problems all of these small businesses entrepreneurs faced were: lack of short-term credit, insurance costs, transportation costs, taxes, and finding employees. Fully 90 percent of those surveyed wanted help in business management. They were interested in: individual consultations with business professionals, business-skills workshops, and meetings with owners of similar businesses to share information on acquiring these skills and to solve mutual problems.

Though not all the women entrepreneurs operated their businesses full-time, more than half worked in excess of 50 hours per week and the average was 44 hours per week. Six out of seven Hilltown businesses reported using family labor in their operations, yet of this number only one out of four of the women-owned businesses got help from their families. Much of this help was from family members other than husbands; only two reported husbands' participation, one at 5 hours per week, another at 14 hours per week.

Men-owned businesses, in constrast, used a great deal of family labor, particularly their wives'. In 40 percent of the men-owned firms wives put in an average of 21 hours per week. Some women worked up to 40 hours per week in their husbands' businesses. This high de-

gree of women's involvement suggests that present estimates of women in business and management are much too low. In many cases, these women manage and operate their husbands' businesses while the men are at full-time jobs elsewhere. Wives will do the buying, scheduling, bookkeeping, taxes, inventory control, deliveries, and other business transactions.

The developed picture of women in business in the rural Hilltowns shows that: they own or are partners in 40 percent of all local enterprises; they put in long hours, despite the "part-time" nature of some of their businesses; few women use unpaid family labor. Their businesses, for the most part, are young and vigorous. They operate in all industrial categories and are well represented in manufacturing, construction, and agricultural industries. Most important, in addition to providing much needed goods and services to their communities, these women are a vital source of income and employment in the rural Hilltown economy. They also need to learn more business skills: technical, legal, advertising, management, employee practices, financing, bookkeeping, etc.

Micro-businesses in Rural Maine

A similar survey of rural microbusinesses in Maine[37] gives us a more detailed picture of the income and employment-gathering capabilities of small-scale independent enterprises. Eight-two individually or family-owned and managed firms with five employees and annual gross receipts under $200,000 were among the businesses examined. Most of the women-owned businesses were micro-businesses (under $10,000) and were concentrated in the services industry, with only a few in manufacturing. Most of these service businesses sell to individuals, primarily within a 25-mile radius of their location. The direct contact with the consumer and close relationship with are residents, as well as a sharp perception of the needs of the community -- for which rural women have strong skills -- were very important to the success of those micro-businesses operating at a small profit margin.

The smallest micro-businesses (under $10,000) in the sample were labor intensive. They had little working capital, small investments in machinery and equipment, and less than $500 invested in inventory. They provided employment for an average of 4.4 workers per business, half of whom were unpaid family members. An interesting characteristic of these microbusinesses is that the smaller firms reported the least fluctuation in number of employees over the year. This employment stability is of major significance to state and local economic development planners; in the previous discussion on rural labor markets, it was seen that larger rural industries readily expand or contract the size of their work force without losing their workers, causing hardship and insecurity for a major portion of the rural labor force.

The Maine study also found that the smallest businesses did not pay lower wages than the larger firms. Of the businesses that paid

less than minimum wage, 63 percent had sales of $60,000 or more. Wages, then, did not increase as the businesses grew. This is a clear refutation of the charge that small rural businesses only provide marginal employment opportunities.

Aside from insufficient capital (a problem of most entrepreneurs) a major problem encountered by rural entrepreneurs in Maine was their lack of experience and business "know-how," particularly in managerial and administrative areas. The problems ranged from basic difficulties with business structure to a lack of daily administrative management skills.

Even for well-established businesses, on-going problems were primarily in the area of management and administration. Forty percent of the micro-businesses in the Maine sample cited this as the number one problem they faced. The absence of this skill -- or someone to teach it -- was so crucial that the majority thought that mismanagement -- rather than lack of capital or marketing difficulties -- was the main reason for rural micro-business failure. Also, it was discovered that the smallest businesses did not utilize free sources of business assistance as much as did larger firms. It was not reported whether this was due to lack of awareness of their existence or because those sources do not (or were not perceived to) offer their help as readily to the smallest entrepreneurs.

Other major problems for the new enterpreneur were: developing a clientele and becoming known in the marketplace. Because markets for most rural businesses are established by word of mouth, it is difficult to hang on until businesses become selfsupporting.

Vocational Education Policy: Entrepreneurial Development and Business Skills Training for Rural Women

Rural women continue to enter the labor force in record numbers to compete for unremunerative, unstable, and unsatisfying dead-end jobs. Economic need is clearly the motivation. Yet, if self-employment is a more flexible, independent, and personally rewarding alternative, why aren't more women seeking to meet their needs this way?

Two possible reasons have direct relevance to vocational educators: rural women have been socialized and educated to perceive their income earning activities only as employees, and extra-market income-generating activities have not been lucrative enough to substitute for wage-earning jobs.

This suggests two courses of action for vocational educators. They could train women for successful self-employment, which would address problems associated with the lack of good job opportunities, the absence of adequate child-care facilities and transportation, and the clear priority placed on family responsibilities. And second, they could respond to the woeful need for a wide range of business-related skills, indicated by the data from New England. The economic

development implications of enhanced female entrepreneurial activity and achievement in rural areas are self-evident.

Entrepreneurial Development

Vocational education programs have traditionally focused their efforts on preparing students for outside employment rather than self-employment or job-creation. And in the case of rural female students, even preparation for wage-earning status has not been given a clear priority.

Most training programs for rural women have not offered an ideology of self-management or economic self-sufficiency.[38] The absence of a self-employment orientation in vocational education is particularly evident in the programs available to most females: consumer and homemaking education, office and health occupations.[39] Consumer and homemaking education is not preparation for employment, and jobs in the health and office fields are traditionally provided by others -- the female must seek work from someone else.

The occupations for which young men are prepared, however, are most often in specialities with long traditions of self-employment, particularly in rural areas; e.g., auto mechanics, carpentry, welding, plumbing and heating, agriculture. While these skills are not taught for self-employment as such, there is an implicit assumption (manifesting itself in educational materials, class discussions, and on-the-job-training experiences) that a young man might use these skills to set up a shop in his garage or barn, or buy a truck and work as an independent tradesman.

Until recently, women in America were never encouraged to nurture entrepreneurial fantasies or to publicly display pride in their entrepreneurial success. Women always had to justify their business activities by "earning additional money for the family;" for men it was always acceptable for business to be an end in itself. And the self-effacing term "pin money" was used for many years by women who were in fact buying basic family necessities with the proceeds of their small enterprises.

Vocational education never encouraged its female students to consider the possibility of using their technical skills to create their own businesses. In fact, vocational education materials do not even suggest that "female" occupations could be the bases for self-employment. Nor do these materials present role models of women who have successfully turned their expertise into money-making enterprises.

For example, neither a two-year child development course nor a day-care aide program mention the possibility -- or the "how to" -- of establishing and operating a day-care center. Homemaking programs do not suggest that many homemaking skills -- given some imagination, research, and market exploration -- could be the bases for small businesses. Beautician training does not teach how to actually set up a business: determining demand and location, obtaining financing, ad-

vertising, recordkeeping, taxation,etc. (Many women do, of course, manage to set up their own businesses, but without the help of educational preparation.)

By now it is a well-established fact that the entrepreneur is not "a rare animal with elusive character, with certain qualities from birth."[40] Entrepreneurial skills can be acquired and developed through educational programs. Vocational education is well suited to developing and preparing entrepreneurs in conjunction with teaching skills. It is the mastery of these skills which give a potential entrepreneur the confidence to undertake the "calculated risk" necessary to start one's own business.[41] Provision of technical skills alone, however, will not create a successful entrepreneur.

Female Aspirations and Entrepreneurship: Do Rural Women Want to be Self-Employed?

There are those who feel that the suggestion that entrepreneurial development might be particularly productive for rural women is seriously off-target. They might even cite studies of rural high school girls' limited occupational aspirations as evidence that training in entrepreneurship would be wasted on them; that, in fact, they might not even sign up for courses so labeled.

Indeed, what has been described as "occupational myopia" in rural females was observed in the Southern Youth Studies[42] which found that the tendency was to limit their working goals to a few occupations, principally beauticians, nurses, secretaries, and school teachers. On the other hand, Faith Dunne's more recent work on female youth aspirations found that there has been a slight shift away from highly stereotyped job choices toward non-stereotyped occupations, many of which lie within the independent or self-employment frame of work: manager, accountant, veterinarian, physician.[43]

The problem with occupational aspiration research, however, is that it tells us nothing about the preferred structure of an individual's work life. The Duncan scale and others used to measure levels of aspiration are constructed, for example, without regard to: how people hope or perceive their work lives will mesh with their social and family lives; whether they want to work alone, with a partner, as part of a team, with or without (and what kind of) a boss; levels of responsibility desired; daily demands and challenges; supervisory or follower status; part-time or full-time. Because of the stereotyped conceptions of the creators of such scales, these characteristics are not taken into account.

However, if two young women choose to build their careers with secretarial skills, one may envision herself working in a secretarial pool with 20 other secretaries, while the other may envision herself as the owner/manager of a typing service or temporary help agency. Likewise, a woman who chooses restaurant work could be thinking about cooking at the local diner, or she could be thinking about owning her

own restaurant or operating a catering service out of her home. In other words, no one has measured either the entrepreneurial aspirations or the ideal "workstyle" of the rural female. Thus, preferences for self-management, or any other type of workstyle and environment are not observable in the ratings.

Entrepreneurship: What is It -- For Women?

The literature on entrepreneurial identification and development offers a wide variety of economic, sociological, psychological, and political factors which determine the likelihood of a person becoming an entrepreneur.

Economists focus not on the individual's characteristics, but on the availability of input -- e.g., technical and managerial knowledge, financing -- as the primary determinants of entrepreneurial development. In this respect, effective education and work experience is essential for rural women and technical and managerial skills will enable them to develop economic opportunities into economic gains. The need for increasing the availability of capital to women entrepreneurs, rural and urban cannot be questioned.

Sociologists suggest that family background is a major factor influencing entrepreneurial tendencies. (This is supported by the occupational literature, which shows that the occupations chosen by offspring are still predicted on their parents' occupations.) In fact, the American Management Assocation survey of women business owners found that half of them had family members -- usually father, brother or husband -- with experience in enterprise formation and operation.[44] A California survey of women business owners also found this association to be true.[45] While a family tradition of entrepreneurship is not necessarily a prerequisite, sociologist Gene Ward suggests that it often does give individuals a certain degree of entrepreneurial "readiness" and a set of attitudes which enable them to recognize and take action on opportunities in the environment.[46] Those without family traditions, however, can achieve that readiness through education and experience, though possibly perceiving opportunities somewhat later in life.

Psychologists attempt to isolate the personality traits of entrepreneurs, generally coming up with characteristics such as: need for achievement, need for power, creativity, propensity for taking risks, independence, and leadership. These character traits, with which our society typically describes the successful businessman, are generally sex-specific: masculine. They are not socially acceptable to women.

It is not far-fetched to surmise that many female entrepreneurs, when measuring themselves against the male-associated "requirements for success," find not only that they fall short, but that they are not interested in acquiring those traits. The difficulties of entering the business world with such negative associations are particularly acute for the rural women trying to adhere to their traditional roles while becoming economically productive.

How, then, do female entrepreneurs reconcile the necessary but undesirable traits of the "successful businessperson" with the desirable female characteristics (that is, desirable to females)? It appears that women are now in the process of redefining entrepreneurship to make it acceptable to themselves.

Ruth S. Finney, one of the very few sociologists to have done research on female entrepreneurship, has found that women entrepreneurs describe their reasons for starting a business, the personal characteristics they consider useful in business, and the meaning of business activity in their lives in an entirely different -- and nonmasculine -- way.[47] These women saw themselves in business primarily to help or please others and to meet community needs.

Finney's interviews of women business-owners in Hawaii showed that, "the women seemed to want approval, appreciation, and recognition that what they are doing was appropriate -- for women."[48] This observation was borne out in their reasons for going into business. Out of a prepared list of thirteen reasons, the most popular was, "I had a good idea and wanted to create something with it." Other possible answers with the same idea, but subtly stressing competition, were not popular, indicating that creativity is more acceptable in our culture. The second most popular choice was, "I wanted to give a needed service or product to others," underscoring the point made above. Other popular choices were "I knew I would be good at it," "I wanted to set my own hours and my own place to work," and "I got tired of working at a dead-end job for someone else."

Thus, Finney suggests, the motivating factors for women entrepreneurs may be creativity and helping others, rather than competition: "To work hard and to compete in the interest of others rather than one's self feels different, looks different, and is more socially acceptable for most women." Finney recommends that, if the cultural norms for a particular group of women are not compatible with the stereotype of the entrepreneur, entrepreneurship trainers should work to reinterpret the nature of the entrepreneurial experience and use that reinterpretation to encourage entrepreneurial entry.[49]

The relevance of Finney's work to the problems of developing entrepreneurial attitudes in rural women is clear. By redefining what being "a woman in business" means, personally, and in relation to the family and the community, rural women may find it much easier to combine their traditional roles with their business activities.

The following is a list of suggested approaches to an entrepreneurial development course for rural women.

1. Develop an awareness of the phenomenon of entrepreneurship, interpreting it in terms to which rural women can relate.

2. Create a positive atmosphere in which to consider entrepreneurial ventures as potential careers.

3. Draw on available entrepreneurial experiences (from the family and the community, and from relevant jobs or volunteer work they might have done).

4. Bring in female entrepreneurs from the community. These role models can contribute to discussions of all the elements on the list.

5. Discuss community needs, drawing on women's awareness and appreciation of community values and resources.

6. Evaluate skills which could be used in an entrepreneurial way to fill those needs.

7. Help women to perceive and gain access to opportunity structures in the community. Expose them to networks of social and physical resources that support new ventures. If those networks do not exist (or do not exist for women), discuss ways in which women can create them (e.g., cooperatives, support groups, day care centers, business association).

8. Help them to develop insight into problems and prospects of entrepreneurship: mother/wife/entrepreneur role, sexism, life-stage planning, social acceptance, and so on.

9. Discuss business requirements and attitudes (such as bookkeeping and self-discipline).

10. Discuss previous sex-stereotyped avoidance, such as math, which women must overcome.

11. Arrange on-the-job training with specific emphasis on observing entrepreneurial behavior and acquiring entrepreneurial experience.

12. Continue to encourage women to enter nontraditional skills areas to give them more experience for diversified entrepreneurship.

13. Encourage men to work on overcoming sexism. There is proof that: women's business successes are tied to the support of their husbands and families, and that women's successes contribute to the economic well-being of their families, their communities, and their husbands' businesses.

It should be noted here that there are entrepreneurial development courses designed for vocational education programs. The courses, however, are primarily offered at the postsecondary level. The fact that the majority of rural females never go on to post-high school training, and the evidence that occupational aspirations are developed very early in life, would indicate that exposure to entrepreneurship

as a career option must take place in early high school at the latest.

Business Skills for Women Entrepreneurs

If the first problem facing vocational education in rural schools is how to introduce the concept of entrepreneurship to women, the second problem is one which vocational education is well-situated to address in its program: the need for courses to help rural women already in business.

As we have seen, 90 percent of women in small rural businesses in the Hilltowns of western Massachusetts need assistance with business management, planning, obtaining credit, bookkeeping, tax and legal matters, marketing, advertising, dealing with employees, and government regulations. Microentrepreneurs in Somerset County, Maine, feel that lack of management skills is the greatest threat to their success. Craftswomen all over Maine are earning poverty-level incomes as they struggle with planning and marketing problems. Women entrepreneurs in California also stressed the need for business courses to help them prepare for business ownership. Rural women in Vermont did not know how to go about starting a business.

Clearly, there is a great deal of entrepreneurial activity in rural areas, and women's participation in business ownership and self-employment is growing. Rural women's business earnings, however, are low, and they are voicing their preference for assistance and training in practical business skills over "personal development" skills.

Women in Finney's Hawaiian survey were asked what their training needs were in two areas, personal and technical. Women in agricultural businesses (representing rural communities in general), reported that their personal needs were clearly related to their business lives: they listed problems such as how to combine business and family, how to handle crises, how to lessen risks, and how to learn from mistakes. In the technical area, their top six needs were: learning about taxes, accounting, cash flow; learning management techniques; and learning about credit and insurance.

Another indication of the large amount of interest in this area was the high degree of participation by women in the Hilltown Project's business skills workshops held in one of the local schools. Postsecondary vocational education could well address these needs. The Hilltown workshops, which were geared specifically to small businesses, cottage industries, and seat-of-the-pants enterprises, covered issues such as product and market definition, how to research your business (sources of information), business plans, start-up costs, credit, banking, business law, cost/price analyses, recordkeeping, taxes, advertising, and other aspects of running a small business, including common mistakes and pitfalls.

One important side product of the workshops was that 35 Hilltown businesspeople became acquainted with each other. They learned about

each other's businesses, contributed suggestions (and experiences) to solve one another's business problems, and shared ideas and tips on how to succeed in business in rural communities. Being an independent businessperson in a rural area can be lonely and difficult. The workshop participants enjoyed and benefited from the sense of being part of a business community. In fact, they also began to investigate the possibility of forming a community development corporation for the nine towns.

The benefits of integrating vocational education with rural economic development activities are clear; but a conscious decision is necessary on the part of rural vocational educators to approach their work with activist attitudes.

Vocational courses for women can also explore new income-generating ideas, such as farm tourism, bed-and-breakfast inns, woodlot management, new cash crops in agriculture, or further processing of current farm crops (cheese?). Nor should the benefits from nonprofit enterprises be ignored (they can create jobs, too), such as barter services, food-buying or canning cooperatives, and day-care centers. Also, women should be encouraged to participate in activities which produce goods or services for which there is a year-round demand in the local market place (as opposed to tourism and export markets).

In addition to offering courses relevant to their needs, most important in ensuring a positive contribution to women's entrepreneurial activities is that the vocational programs be both accessible and affordable to rural women.

Coordinating Needs, Training, and Community Awareness

Other institutions and agencies also have roles to play in helping to develop and support rural women entrepreneurs. Vocational education programs should seek to coordinate their training programs with these groups at all times.

The Small Business Administration, for example, currently has little visibility in rural areas, due in some part to understaffing and in large part to ignorance of rural business activities. However, they could extend their educational outreach to rural areas, even if only through wider dissemination of their literature. A major step forward for some micro-businesspeople, particularly women, is to learn that they are indeed <u>in</u> business (not just earning "pin money"). Other rural women need to be told they <u>can</u> be in business.

The Small Business Administration's Small Business Institute, located in colleges around the nation, should try to get participants out to rural businesses that need help more, perhaps, than the record stores trying to get off the ground on the fringes of college campuses.

The Small Business Development Centers beginning to proliferate around the country now should develop outreach programs not only for

women but for rural businesses, both male- and female-owned.

The American Association of Community and Junior Colleges recently developed a women business-owned orientation and counseling program and curriculum which they are now introducing to junior and community college faculty around the nation. Junior and community colleges have been offering business skills courses for some time, but they must recognize that, as widely dispersed as their compuses are, they are not always accessible to rural women. These colleges should consider off-campus courses, thus getting the faculty and resources out into rural communities where more women can take advantage of them.

Women's business organizations, as well as women members of Chambers of Commerce and other male-dominated business groups, should also be encouraged to extend their support and activities to rural women business-owners. Serious interest in their enterprises will help rural women to consider their businesses seriously and to overcome the "Well, it's not really a business" syndrome, which stunts entrepreneurial development.

Government economic development agencies should be made aware of the importance of microbusinesses to rural economies. Knowledge of the contribution to income and employment already made by this sector as well as awareness of potential contribution might encourage these agencies to develop much-needed support programs for such businesses.

Women must also learn to organize themselves into operative groups to overcome institutional barriers. Buying, producing, and marketing cooperatives may be necessary, and rural women, many of whom are alrady experienced in cooperative work, should learn to use this method to advantage.

Since credit unions and revolving loan funds may be the only readily available sources of funding, women should become knowledgeable enough about them to take full advantage of their availability.

Community development corporations should be supported and they, in turn, should recognize the legitimate needs of female entrepreneurs and support them in their efforts.

Studies of local resources, technological choices, and market possibilities should be made available so that women can use them to initiate or enlarge entrepreneurial activities.

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17. Had Dunne, et al. asked these high school girls what they expected (rather than aspired) to do, the responses may have been quite different. In a longitudinal study of rural youth in the South, only 2.5% of white females aspired to becoming housewives. But, when asked what they expected to be doing in four years, 29% thought that they probably would be housewives. There was a marked difference between white and black females' expectations in this study: only 3% of the black females expected to be housewives, which reflects their probably role as primary providers.

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33. A more inclusive survey was not yet available when this was written.

34. Aroostock, Hancock, Kennebec, Knox, Lincoln, Penobscot, York in Maine; Belknap, Carroll, Cheshire, Coos, Grafton, Strafford in New Hampshire; Bennington, Chittenden, Rutland, Washington, Windham, Windsor in Vermont; Franklin in Massachusetts; Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Jefferson, St. Lawrence, Warren, Washington in New York.

35. Based on data collected by the author while working with the Hilltown Project of the Center for Rural Communities, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts, 1978.

36. It is difficult to convey on paper the incongruity of this figure with the apparent quiet of these towns. The large number -- and the astonishing variety -- of Hilltown enterprises surprised Hilltown residents as much as it did project staff; many residents were not as familiar with their towns' activities as they used to be. For the local people who, in the days of cheap transportation became dependent on Valley services, shopping centers, factories, and hospitals, it was a reminder that many of their needs could be satisfied by local businesses, thus saving them the high cost and the hours of driving (sometimes down steep, icy hillsides) into the Valley.

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III. Farmwomen and Vocational Education

by Frances Hill

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze farmwomen's occupational roles and determine the ways in which vocational education programs can assist them. For example: How can vocational education programs help solve the job-entry problem? What combination of general skills and job-specific skills would be most useful for farmwomen? And what are the most beneficial -- and appropriate -- contributions that the public and private sectors can provide in such education?

To explore these questions, I conducted research among Midwestern farmwomen and also reviewed data from research conducted among farmwomen in other regions of the country.[1] My research included semi-structured, tape-recorded interviews with 103 farmwomen, most of them married women who helped operate commercial farms. Though most of the farms were medium-sized, the sampling ranged from very large farms to some part-time operations. The latter -- including farms operated not so much as businesses but as a return to the land -- were the exception in my sample as indeed they are in the Midwest.

The paper is concerned with:

- Farmwomen rather than all women living in rural areas -- an important if sometimes elusive distinction.
- Agriculture as an occupation and a business, not as a rural setting.
- Women already involved in agriculture. The reason: lack of capital, not lack of skills, is now a major barrier to entering agriculture as a farm owner-operator.
- Vocational education from the standpoint of farmwomen's needs and constraints rather than those of educational institutions.
- Different groups of farmwomen including full-time commercial operators, part-time farmwomen with off-farm jobs, and farmworkers.

Cultural Context of Rural Vocational Education

Rural America is not a museum filled with picturesque characters embodying values markedly different from those of other Americans. Well-intentioned romantics are unequipped to understand the values and needs of contemporary American farmers. Other than people who have returned to the land to live lives of voluntary simplicity, American farmers are capitalists who want to make a legal dollar -- or preferably two.

Farmwomen spend less time today tending vegetable gardens and canning, pickling, and preserving the family food supply. Microwave ovens and convenience foods have changed the lives in agrarian America as well as in the cities. When farmers see themselves as different or feel that society sees them as different, it is as much a source of anxiety as it is of self-satisfaction. Culture is shaped by regional and class differences, but the general contours of the mainstream culture share some similarities.

Most women interviewed in the Middle West still bridle at what they take to be urban condescension toward farmers. Almost every woman interviewed related some horror story of social snobbery. For example, a Wisconsin woman in Washington, D.C. to testify before Congress on dairy price supports was asked by the elevator operator at her hotel whether she had ever been in an elevator before and whether there was indoor plumbing on her farm. These personal experiences reinforce the general feeling that urban people still regard farmers as backward and benighted. Any suggestion that farmers should be rustic and picturesque is likely to be greeted with an outrage that cannot be understood by romantics, especially those from privileged urban backgrounds. Farmers react against the idea enshrined in American folkways and in American academic scholarship that the best and the brightest moved to the city, while the timid, the mentally impaired, and the backward stayed on the farm.[2] Farmers might like to suggest that they are better than urban Americans -- harder-working and more inclined to uphold cultural values -- but they are overbearing about these claims. They seem willing to settle for being regarded as similar to the middle class in the dominant urban-suburban sectors of American culture.

Most farmers are capitalists. This is especially true of those commercial farmers who try to make a living from their farms. It is less true -- or not at all true -- of part-time farmers, hobby farmers, or back-to-the-land devotees. Perceptions of commercial "family" farmers as part of a neglected, backward rural group that requires compensatory programs will simply alienate farmers.[3] Whether farmers should, in their own self-interest, make common cause with other sectors of the rural population is beyond the scope of this paper. The fact is that they do not. A similarly important fact is that non-farm rural people, rural organizations, and rural advocates do not reach out to farmers as part of a larger "rural" constituency. For example, in December, 1977, the Board of Rural America, Inc., voted not to include a farmer on its Board. Or, to be more precise,

the motion to do so died for lack of a second. For their part, farmwomen find many gatherings of rural women too "Appalachian," a codeword for too strong an orientation toward the rural poor.

Farmers have paradoxical attitudes toward government programs. Although they are beneficiaries of commodity programs, government ownership and operation loans, and a government-financed research and extension complex linked to the land grant universities, farmers' organizations nevertheless routinely go on record for less government interference. Farmers, whatever the incongruence between their behavior and their articulated policy postions, do not turn first to government programs in the non-farm components of their lives.

Educational institutions are probably more accepted by farmers than other public service organizations, but the content of the programs and the ways they are presented will be important in the response of farmwomen to new initiatives. Romantic attempts to make rural America a museum where the urban middle class can to go relax from the tension of the "real world" will meet nothing but scorn and rejection. Vocational education programs that preach to farmpeople about the cultural virtues of their lives despite the economic disadvantages will sound something like the colonial administrators who, while seeking to "civilize" the "natives," nevertheless wanted to convince them that seeking European jobs and European standards of living would destroy the integrity of their cultures.[4]

Different Roles for Farmwomen

Women as Farm Owner-Operators

Defining the population of farmwomen is a difficult task for two reasons. First, it is unclear how various censuses have defined "farming" and how these different definitions have been applied. For instance, is a "farmer" an owner or an owner who also operates a farm? Census data indicate that almost 9 percent of American farmers are women. This says very little about the relation between women and their farms. Second, women who farm as partners in kinship units have usually not been counted as "farmers." The census in all its population counts, has never solved the problem of how to classify women who work with their husbands but are not listed as owners or workers. The simplest way has been to ignore the women as co-contributors, as owners, or operators, or workers. Women's only hope of being recorded in the census as individual participants in agriculture was to be single or to be a hired worker. Wives were not counted. As a result, they did not count. Married women's roles as farm owner-operators have been hidden from history by a screen of cultural myths about male gallantry and female delicacy. From this perspective, men farm and women merely "help" -- even when they are performing the same tasks for the same number of hours. To talk seriously about women's roles in the farm operation -- beyond the occasional

bow to the "little ladies" by the agricultural press or at farm meetings -- is to enter a new area. Understandably, educational institutions have done little to help women perform in roles that only the women themselves knew -- or admitted -- they were doing.

While the problems of defining and identifying "farmwomen" in national data persist, farmwomen themselves seem increasingly assertive about their roles and their needs. My research shows that well over half the women interviewed and surveyed identified themselves as either "farmers" or farmwives, but rarely as simply "housewives." These women report that this is a change in self-perception during their own lives and is also a change from the self-identities of the women in their mothers' generations. Farmwomen in other generations also worked. The change is that women seem to be deriving more personal gratification from this work.

Farmwomen's interests in farm-related topics is evident in the policy statements of the new farmwomen's organizations. American Agri-Women, Women Involved in Farm Economics (WIFE), United Farm Wives, and Concerned Farm Wives are all agricultural policy organizations. They were established during the 1970's and their memberships are still increasing. The organizations now exist in most parts of the country and they have begun to have an impact through lobbying in Washington and in various state capitals.

In addition, there are several auxiliaries of male-dominated commodity organizations. These auxiliaries took on new roles during the 1970's, and their members assumed the major responsibility for produce promotion and for a more broadly conceived public relations effort to build better relations between producers and consumers. Farmwomen's active interest in the running of their own businesses comes as a surprise only to those "good old boys" in the agricultural establishment who have always been convinced that "farmer" is a male noun.

Contemporary farmwomen perform three main roles: managerial, technical, and financial/marketing. These roles, having changed rapidly, have begun to require more precise expertise as farms have become more fully linked with administration and have used increasingly advanced technologies.

Management tasks are becoming more complex and more important to the success of a farm. Farmwomen are now being recognized as the farm bookkeepers. Over 80 percent of the women I surveyed and interviewed reported that they bore the major responsibility for bookkeeping. The complexity of this task has increased with the complexity of the tax codes. Farm recordkeeping systems are generally geared to the needs of the Internal Revenue Service and to the decisionmaking needs of the farmers, who require extensive and precise technical information as well as financial information. These two sets of needs are by no means complementary. And women are becoming increasingly experienced in both types of recordkeeping. Those women with high school or vocational school commercial training tend to feel more at east with these responsibilities than those with no previous experience in commercial

recordkeeping. The farm records are not simple extensions of household accounts.

Some farmers now subscribe to computerized recordkeeping services with farmwomen providing the raw data and interpreting the processed data. A few commercial firms are developing small computers and appropriate software for farm use. These technical changes will place new types of demands upon farmers. And if present patterns hold, farmwomen will be the family members responsible for understanding these information processing changes and relating them to the needs of the farm operation.

In addition to recordkeeping, farm management involves complex estate planning and other undertakings which require an understanding of property law. This is further complicated by the blend of kinship and contract characteristics of farming and some other small businesses. Farm management involves that little-understood interface between family law and property law. Few lawyers or legal scholars have worked creatively in this area with an eye to the practical problems faced by farm families. Even fewer have considered the particular vulnerabilities of farmwomen. Estate planning now centers on efforts to protect the estate, not on efforts to balance the interests of the various people involved in building it. Under present law, estate plans often exclude women from ever owning the land or other property. The partial solutions offered by current law have made farm families more aware of the problems without offering any realistic solutions. As a result, women continue to be excluded and the property passes from father to children -- usually sons -- directly. This lack of legal protection intensifies the marginality of the farmwomen's position vis-à-vis the farm.

Farmwomen do not simply stay in the house and keep records. Direct involvement in farm production requires a high degree of technical expertise. Women realize that they require such expertise whether they are farming with their husbands or on their own. Many of the women interviewed expressed confidence that they could handle the business management side of the farm but felt less confident of their ability to make the technical production decisions. Many are determined to acquire these skills.

In an era of resource constraints, the challenges facing farmwomen in reassessing their technical skills and finding more appropriate production techniques do not differ from the challenges faced by male farmers. There are not male and female methods of farm production.

Contemporary agriculture is not characterized by a rigid sexual division of labor. There are few, if any, cultural traditions or taboos and mechanization has reduced the importance of physical strength. Women are guided by need and interest, not by culture or biology.

Women also are involved in the marketing of farm commodities.

The type of involvement varies with the major commodities and with the prevailing marketing arrangements. Fruit and vegetable producers are most likely to engage in various forms of direct marketing: they may operate roadside stands or participate in farmers' markets in urban centers. The Agricultural Marketing Project, headquartered in Nashville, Tennessee, facilitates direct marketing by small farmers in Tennessee, Arkansas, and Alabama. Women have participated as staff members, producer/sellers, and as consumer-organizers.[6] Interest in direct marketing seems to be growing both among consumers who seek better, possibly cheaper food, as well as among farmers seeking to retain a greater share of the consumers' food dollars.

With commodities like grains or dairy products, which require processing, direct marketing is never feasible. These commodities are sold through cooperatives and other large organizations. Small, local cooperatives have merged into large, multi-state supercoops, like the Associated Milk Producers, Inc. These supercoops are still cooperatives protected under the Capper-Volstead Act, but their operations are more remote from their members and far more complex than the operation of the local coops they have replaced.[7]

Whether women become involved in marketing organizations or focus on their own farms and play larger roles in marketing their farm products, they need better information on marketing strategies. Futures trading, the operation of the transnational commodity markets, and the possibilities of establishing independent local marketing channels will all become increasingly important. The old idea that farmers should be pricetakers who simply deliver their products to the nearest buying station is no longer satisfactory. Indeed, farmer discontent throughout American history suggests that this has never been satisfactory and that farmers have always sought greater involvement in marketing arrangements. Farmwomen are now becoming more publicly involved in these efforts. During my research in the Middle West I interviewed a woman who worked off the farm as a futures trader and who also marketed all the commodities of a 1,000 acre farm in central Iowa. Another woman, Nita Gibson of Seminole, Texas, the national president of Women Involved in Farm Economics, is the founder and president of a cotton marketing organization. Such women could be resources for other farmwomen -- and men -- in coping with the financial pressures of contemporary agriculture through more remunerative marketing arrangements.

Black farmwomen perform all these roles, too. However, their problems are compounded by the lingering effects of racial discrimination. Black-owned and black-operated farms historically have tended to be smaller and less heavily capitalized than white-owned and operated farms. Black farmers -- male and female -- have been less well-served by government agricultural programs and by agricultural institutions. Even now, black farmers continue to leave the land, and are nearly extinct as a group. Black farmers owned almost 15 million acres in 1920. Now they own less than 4 million acres.[8]

This decline was caused by several factors.[9] Black farmers have,

in general, suffered from all the problems of white small farmers, in addition to the larger problems of racial discrimination. In addition, the legal snarls surrounding "heirs property" that permits land speculators to gain control of land legally, easily, and cheaply continues to drive black farmers off the land that they thought they owned.[10]

The situation of black farmwomen suggests that even equal access to future programs may be insufficient to solve the problems created by past discrimination -- both racial and sexual. Black farmers may not need courses in management and technology as much as they need help with the legal snarls of "heirs property."

Employment Off the Farm

Increasing numbers of women are taking off-farm jobs. However, current data do not contain such details as the numbers of farmwomen making this choice, the types of farms from which they come, or the types of off-farm jobs they take. Census data do provide information on metro and rural non-farm populations.

Women in nonmetro areas are entering the labor force in unprecedented numbers.[11] In fact, employment among nonmetro women is growing even more rapidly than among nonmetro men. However, men still constitute the majority of the labor force and still command significantly higher salaries. Indeed, the relative earnings of nonmetro women in the labor force actually declined between 1969 and 1976.[12] The decline is accounted for by the concentration of women in low paying jobs and by an apparent tendency to pay women low wages even for jobs classified as professional and managerial.[13]

All of these trends affect farmwomen. What is not clear is whether farmwomen and non-farm rural women are affected in the same ways as a result of this more widespread employment. Within the general pattern of increased female employment in nonmetro areas, farmwomen would seem to constitute a special subgroup with particular needs. They are, in most cases, dual-career women who are making an economic contribution to the farm as well as working off the farm. To understand these patterns and the possible contributions that educational institutions could make, one must turn from general data on rural women to less extensive but more specific field research data dealing directly with farmwomen.

Farmwomen seek off-farm employment for two basic reasons: the drive for personal fulfillment and the economic realities of contemporary agriculture. Except for those women who have alternative careers off the farm, most farmwomen adapt their work to the cash needs and production cycles of the farm. Women who see themselves primarily as farmers will seek jobs that do not conflict with farm production. This means that these farmwomen -- as well as men -- will seek temporary or part-time employment. This is true of those farmers who regard their farms as at least potentially profitable enough to support their families.

During the last decade, however, there has been an increase in part-time farmers whose farm operations are designed to fit into a working life that includes a permanent full-time (or even two full-time) off-farm job. Obviously, the employment preferences of the two groups of farmers will differ. The most important point is that off-farm employment is part of a larger pattern of economic activity in which the nature and labor requirements of the farms are important considerations.

The desire for personal fulfillment is not unique to farmwomen, but the particular relations of these women to their farms makes this a need that they are unlikely to fulfill completely in farming. Those women who wanted off-farm employment for personal fulfillment related this desire to the lack of a sense of individual identity and individual achievement associated with agriculture.

The farm is linked with the family. This is in some cases a nuclear family and in some cases an extended family, a kinship and production unit linked either with the husband or wife's parents or with the brothers or sisters or other relatives. In most cases, the land seems to be tied to the husband's kin group, leaving the wife a somewhat peripheral kin by contract, not by blood. In the case of the increasingly common "brothers' partnership" or "brothers' corporation," wives may be excluded from participation in farmwork or farm management in the interest of keeping peace in the family.[14] The mother may keep the books as long as she is able because she is the only woman trusted by all partners or stockholders. Even the wife's manual labor may arouse the jealousies and suspicions of other kin. This leaves her few chances for self-fulfillment on the farm. Even when she is permitted or required to work and help manage a family enterprise, she may wish to do something off the farm by herself. This is not necessarily for herself in a financial sense because the money is most likely to go for farm or family needs. The sense of personal fulfillment comes from the fact that she is not simply helping her husband or other male relatives but is doing her job in her own way and is rewarded for it as an individual. Her personal income is additional confirmation of this individualization.

Income has other material meanings and purposes. In a family enterprise it is difficult to show what money is used for the family and what is used for the business, as many women have discovered when trying to show financial contributions to the farm to avoid paying inheritance taxes. Moreover, agriculture returns less income per dollar invested than any other industry -- approximately 3 percent. While farmers have a high net worth, their work generates a limited net income. Cash flow problems are endemic. For instance, during the 1970's, farmers coped with the increased production costs of farming not through higher prices for commodities but through their increased borrowing capacity due to appreciation in the value of their land. With less operating capital available, the tenuousness of borrowing operating capital against an appreciating real asset became increasingly clear. One response has been to seek off-farm income. Women and men -- whose primary motivation is pecuniary, must balance

the income from an off-farm job with what they could earn by working full time on the farm. As a result, only certain types of off-farm jobs will be economically rational.[15]

Whether farmwomen can achieve personal growth or enhance their incomes through off-farm employment will depend upon the types of jobs available, the level of wages, and other benefits. Farmers, male or female, are not a mobile labor force. Farmers are not a proletariat but a bourgeoisie that may become a quasi-proletariat. If the main economic activity and the main identity centers on the farm, these workers will not compromise the economic viability of the farm in the interest of off-farm employment. Thus, farmers take jobs that are within commuting distance of their farms and that can be adapted to the farm production cycle. Employers are aware of such constraints. Nonmetro jobs offer lower and less attractive benefits than those of urban industries, especially those which are unionized. Women receive even lower wages, on average, than do men in these rural industries.

Relationships between the agrarian and industrial sectors of the rural economy are virtually unresearched. Neither individual needs nor structural possibilities are understood. All that one can say with any confidence is that increasing numbers of farmwomen are pursuing two careers while continuing to bear the main burden of housework and child care.

Women as Farm Workers

In 1970, the Census reported 141,000 women "farm laborers and farm foremen."[16] The roles were as diverse as neighborhood teenagers working for wages, skilled experts in animal husbandry, hired hands, and migrant and undocumented workers. It is no easier and no wiser to generalize about farmworkers than about owner-operators. The problems, however, are so pervasive that it is difficult to distinguish those of women from those of men or children.

The most severe hardships and the most difficult problems for society focus on the migrant workers. Little has changed since Edward R. Murrow first brought the exploitation of migrants to public attention in "Harvest of Shame." Reports issued by the Senate Subcommittee on Employment, Poverty, and Migratory Labor continue to document the same pattern of exploitation of entire families. Robert Coles has chronicled the same story of the exploitation of men, women, and children in fields across America.[17]

Few public programs have addressed this problem because migrant workers -- poorly paid, without political influence, in some cases vulnerable to deportation as noncitizens should they become "undisciplined" -- are vital to the prosperity of powerful farm owner-operators. These owner-operators are organized in large cooperatives and commodity organizations, and can influence the American Farm Bureau Federation, historically the farm organization with the greatest influence over federal agricultural policy.

The workers' own response has been unionization and increased organization for both wage demands and political influence.[18] This approach has perhaps mitigated some problems but has not changed their basic position of vulnerability and exploitation.

Farm labor markets are not stable. Land grant universities continue to develop crops and machines that reduce the need for labor and there is little evidence that members of the present manual labor force are upgraded to fill new jobs requiring new skills. The current controversy over mechanization is that it destroys jobs without creating new ones. Critics do not question mechanization as much as they question the types of machines being developed. Far more tax-supported research has gone into the development of large machines for ever-larger farms.[19] Few farmworkers, male or female, can hope to work up to better paying jobs or to own their own farms. The old concept of the "agricultural ladder" -- through which the hired hand could become a farmowner through hard work, upgraded skills, and thrift -- has never applied to significant numbers of migrant workers regardless of their personal merits.[20]

Toward a Realistic Perspective on Vocational Education's Usefulness for Various Types of Farmwomen

It is clear that women in agriculture have needs that might be addressed through education. Women farmowner-operators, women working on their farms and holding off-farm jobs, black farmwomen, and women farmworkers have occupationally related needs as well as desires for personal development and economic betterment.

The desire to develop as many government programs as possible for every sector of the population is a generous impulse. The question is: what actually helps those for whom the programs are designed? What problems are amenable to educational remedies? In what cases would education have little impact on occupational and personal betterment? In what cases might educational programs actually be counterproductive?

Vocational education literature discusses the general controversies over the usefulness of vocational education for job entry, the desirability of providing general or specific skills, and the relative responsibilities of the public and private sectors in providing various types of vocational training.[21] Each issue is important in understanding how vocational education might or might not contribute to the economic and personal betterment of various groups of farmwomen.

Occupation entry is a complex process. There is little evidence that lack of education is a barrier to entry into the occupation of a farmowner-operator or that vocational education programs would facilitate entry. Persons with degrees in agriculture, but lacking capital, still may not be able to establish their own farms, unless they marry

or inherit land. This is as true for small-scale farmers as for large-scale farmers and for farmers of all ethnic groups. It is difficult to imagine that a farm person or a farm family might have the capital required for farming but might be held back because they lack the necessary skills or degrees. It is equally difficult to imagine how vocational education would help aspiring farmers acquire capital. Vocational education would be of primary benefit to those women who are already involved in agriculture but who have been excluded from the land grant and extension systems.

Until the 1970's, the agricultural colleges had a white male quota of virtually 100 percent.[22] During the 1970's, women began to enter the agricultural colleges in unprecedented numbers and now constitute anywhere from 20 percent to over 40 percent of those majoring in production-related courses.

The paradox is that this change has come too late for those women already farming and has come at a time when few of the young agricultural majors -- male or female -- will be able to own or operate their own farms. Few farmwomen will have the time to enroll in full-time college programs, even if they live within commuting distance of the schools. They will have to fit vocational education into lives already filled with running their businesses, caring for families, perhaps working at an off-farm job, and participating in community and agricultural organizations. In the foreseeable future there could be a group of farmwomen interested in enhancing their agricultural skills but having few opportunities to do so. Vocational education needs to address the problem of accessibility as well as entry.

It is more difficult to determine the utility of vocational education programs for entry into off-farm jobs in rural industries.[23] Farmwomen are unlikely to have either the specific skills required by the industries in the local area or the more general knowledge required to find jobs and ensure that they are treated as the law requires and as they deserve. Vocational education is more responsive to the specific skills needed. Vocational agricultural in some districts offers much more than production agriculture, with courses in many related occupations.

Schools have been less successful with the more general, job-seeking skills. Women seek job counseling on every aspect of employment -- from the application process, to the protection of their rights as workers and as women, to strategies for advancement. In offering these services, educational institutions must guard against sexism in their advice as well as against a tendency to be oriented to the status quo and thus to employers rather than to employees.

One personal experience will serve to illustrate the possible dangers without claiming that this incident is necessarily model behavior among rural career counselors. Southwest Minnesota State University in Marshall, Minnesota, sees itself as a rural institution. As part of their attempt to serve students from rural backgrounds as well as the adult population of the surrounding rural area, the Uni-

versity in June, 1978, sponsored a week-long symposium on rural issues, including the needs and perspectives of rural women.[24]

One session dealt with non-farm employment in rural areas. Among the panelists was the director of the campus job placement office, who told an audience of farmwomen that he always advised married women to take their husbands to job interviews so that employers would know it was "all right" to hire them. When he was reminded that such actions were illegal, he dismissed criticism by saying that many employers told him they liked this procedure. It was, after all, "voluntary" for women to do this. The farmwomen in the audience seemed distinctly unimpressed. Several women of varying ages stated that could not imagine taking their husbands along on a job interview. The job placement director, a fairly young man, never seemed to consider putting himself in the place of the job applicant as well as the employer.

Problems of occupational entry are most acute for women farmworkers whose farm jobs are disappearing rapidly. These women are not likely to have many skills relevant to the off-farm labor market. Since they may have little formal education, their cases raise the issue of the relative importance of providing programs that offer general or specific skills.

Vocational education programs could help provide the agricultural labor force, including migrant laborers, with basic education in literacy and the general skills necessary for dealing with government and businesses. Educational programs could cover literacy courses in English and Spanish, basic math, basic business practices, and organizational skills in conjunction with occupational courses. Such courses might themselves have to be migratory, moving from job to job with the workers so that they would not have to choose between education and employment.

It remains to be seen whether overworked, underfed, poorly paid workers given inadequate medical care could take advantage of such programs after long days of stoop labor. Karl Marx's early writings on the complete life linking labor and scholarship assumed rather more bucolic endeavors than toiling for agribusiness.

The provision of specific skills would have to be assessed in relation to actual job opportunities. Learning specific skills for nonexistent jobs has been a recurrent criticism of vocational education.[25] Such programs might only serve to convince those without jobs that joblessness is the result of personal deficiencies rather than of problems in the economic system. The idea that everyone can have a job if properly trained may not be true, but without training, jobs are even harder to find. If vocational programs fail to take account of larger economic constraints, they risk becoming tools of repressive socialization rather than of individual betterment.[26]

Rural industrialization raises the question of the appropriate division of responsibility between public and private sectors. The

entire issue of division of responsibility for particular types of education must be considered within the context of other public cost-sharing arrangements associated with rural industrialization. What responsibility for vocational education is public and what is private will require more thought than seems currently to be given to these matters. The costs of expanded educational responsibilities in rural areas with no vocational schools or community colleges must be considered. In these areas, high schools might provide some facilities for adult education at night, on weekends, or even during the school day, depending on local conditions. Vocational education geared too narrowly to the needs of a particular industry in a particular location might well be a corporate responsibility. Tax concessions made to industries to locate in particular rural areas may already be a tax burden on the rest of the community. The local community and government decisionmakers should decide if public funds should establish vocational schools to service one or two industries that have already received a variety of tax concessions.

Educational institutions must make choices regarding rapid rural industrialization: either they can serve as labor recruiters and guardians of the status quo despite current condtions or they can provide broader opportunities.[27] Since rural industrialization is not the perfect solution to the problems of rural Americans and rural America, then educational institutions cannot responsibly avoid these inquiries and these choices.

If educational institutions simply assume the role of labor recruiters or socializers, of adapting individuals to the requirements of specific industries, then they would seem to be derelict in their duty to the taxpayers who support these educational institutions. Such challenges and demands are made on most educational institutions.

Vocational institutions should think of all the roles that male farmers and farmwomen could play in rural economies. Their roles as workers in the new industries may be among the least important roles they will play. Rural industrialization is a consequence of public policies rather than of decisions by components of the private sector acting in isolation. As citizens -- voters and taxpayers -- of local areas into which companies move, farmers are called upon to decide bond issues and tax concessions granted to the new industries. Vocational programs might provide instruction in community planning, public finance, and rural development in light of the roles of members of the community planning and paying for rural industrialization.

Institutional Context of Vocational Education

This paper does not deal explicitly with the various institutions and programs that have in the past characterized vocational education. It is, however, important to describe the larger institutional context of post-secondary training -- or its alternatives -- for adults.

There have been no full-scale programs designed for women. And

while women have not been equitably served by those programs provided to men farmers, the few production-related programs designed for farmwomen have been overwhelmingly successful. For example, Professor Clarence Olson of the Dairy Sciences program of the University of Wisconsin at Madison pioneered in developing such programs and his dairy production seminars are now an institution in agrarian Wisconsin. These two-day seminars deal exclusively with production-related issues.

When Professor Olson first presented the idea, the extension service assured him that no farmwomen would be interested. But, when the county agent in LaCrosse County decided to take the risk of co-sponsoring such a seminar, the 50 women registrants -- the maximum number permitted -- drove through a blizzard to attend. The University of Missouri at Columbia sponsored a seminar on hog production. They had places for 200 women. Over 300 responded to the preregistration invitation, and some had to be turned away. These examples suggest that despite serious interest, little is being done so far by educational institutions.

This is not to say that a vocational education establishment offering programs for farmwomen will enter an uncontested policy area. Even though none of the rural American institutions has served farmwomen well in the past, they might well prevent new institutions and new programs from entering their domain. Choosing the appropriate approach mechanism for the development and implementation of programs for farmwomen will involve political choices and potential protests.

Land-grant universities and the allied extension service are politically powerful and well-financed. There is little reason to expect the land-grant complex to deviate from its long-established practice of guarding its domain fiercely and tenaciously.[28] Indeed, the land-grant complex can be expected to fight to maintain its hegemony.[29] Thus, vocational education institutions will have to pick their way through a political minefield if land-grant colleges see them as competitors.

The land-grant/extension service monopoly would be less disquieting if this organizational monopoly offered a broader range of technologies to a diverse rural population. This, unfortunately, has not been the case. For much of the period since World War II, the land-grant agricultural orthodoxy has been as rigid as the land-grant conviction that men farm and women only help. Women may find that equal access to the existing land-grant degree programs, i.e., short courses and seminars, could be irrelevant or even counterproductive to their needs.

This poses another challenge to vocational education: the need to assess the state of the art in providing occupationally relevant skills. This issue is not discussed in the literature on vocational education. The emphasis instead is on dissemination of information and the challenge of financing the new equipment necessary to train students in current production techniques. Vocational educators seem

to assume that needed skills are clearly defined in relation to the requirements of the job. This is perhaps a safe and responsible assumption for industrial training since the job aspirants cannot define the technologies they will need. Farmers can define, at least to some extent, the technologies that they will use on their farms. In this context, vocational education requires not simply information dissemination but the presentation of a broad range of technologies that different farmers might find useful on their farms.

There is little reason for vocational institutions to duplicate the programs offered by the well-funded land-grant/extension service complex. There is every reason for vocational institutions to broaden the range of information available to farmers and to make special efforts to include farmwomen in their programs.

Teaching production techniques devised in and appropriate to the era of inexpensive petroleum-based technologies would be counterproductive in the present era. Most farmers now in business know how to use these techniques. However, they do not know, and are interested in learning, ways to make their farms economically viable in the new world of expensive energy and high-cost farm management. Vocational programs for adult farmers could usefully provide information on a range of alternative production technologies. Several such approaches have been tested through projects outside of the land-grant research complex.[30] Indeed, many of the land-grant colleges have fiercely opposed government-funded projects on alternative production.[31] Vocational schools could provide valuable information to women -- and men -- already in agriculture by disseminating the available information. Land-grant colleges and the extension service give every indication of continuing to provide information on outmoded production techniques.

Technical training should be flexible enough to vary with the size of the farm, the major commodities, and the types of technologies already in use. Such basics as machinery maintenance and repair would interest all farmwomen. Courses on animal husbandry and crop sciences consistent with the production systems of particularly areas have proved successful in those few cases where they have been organized for women. For some farmers, courses in the uses and application techniques of pesticides and herbicides might be useful. Even in those cases where farmers prefer to hire the supplier of these chemicals to apply them on a contract custom-work basis, many farmers and farmwomen are expressing the desire to know more about the technologies that they have adopted. The rapidly increasing cost of these technologies -- both in absolute terms and relative to the prices received for the commodities produced -- make farmers increasingly interested in learning about the best application procedures and the most economical use of technologies that were introduced in an era of low petroleum prices.

For the same reasons, farmers have become interested in learning

about alternative technologies such as solar energy for crop drying, and the heating of barns, milk houses, and farrowing houses; farm alcohol; composting and organic fertilizers. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, the land-grant universities, and the extension service have not yet fully researched these possible alternative technologies, nor have they made available information about them accessible to farmers. Vocational schools could provide courses that survey actual on-farm experiences with these technologies. They could sponsor short courses or one- or two-day seminars on particular technologies. They could sponsor hands-on workshops in the construction of solar installations or stills for the on-farm production of alcohol and for the modification of machinery to use these fuels. The U.S. Department of Energy is currently sponsoring 40 workshops on farm alcohol production in cooperation with vocational schools and community colleges. The favorable response of farmers has led to consideration of expanding the program.

Women are interested in these issues. Indeed, Women Involved in Farm Economics (WIFE) has been the leader among farm organizations in urging the development of a national farm alcohol production program. The need for such a program and for education in the construction and operation of on-farm stills was the central theme of WIFE's 1980 National convention in Lubbock, Texas.

Farm management courses still proceed on the assumption that farms are run by males and that females are either uninvolved or only peripherally involved. Ands conventional sources of agricultural research and education have failed to investigate the unique business and legal problems of farmwomen. Indeed, even less is known about legal and business problems in farming than about alternative production technologies. Yet those most knowledgeable and most in need of knowledge in these areas are farmwomen.

In developing such programs, any cooperative arrangements with the land-grant/extension system that prove feasible should be explored. In those cases where active cooperation is limited, it might at least be possible to avoid opposition.

The best hope for cooperative relationships would seem to be with the 17 "historically black" 1890's land-grant colleges. These separate and unequal land colleges were established primarily to keep black students out of white land-grant institutions. Until the past 10 years, they were massively underfunded. They received no research funds until 1967 and no extension funds until 1972. The 17 colleges now receive a total of approximately $10 million for extension services and $17 million for research.[32] The schools are located in 16 States from Texas to Delaware, in areas heavily affected by rural industrialization. They already have had experience with the blend of farm and non-farm occupations that is becoming important in other areas of the country as well.

These institutions focus on the needs of people with limited resources. Each school has departments of vocational education and vo-

cational agriculture. In areas already served by these institutions, the establishment of other institutions seems unnecessary. Instead, the colleges' short courses, field days, and general extension efforts could be reinforced and expanded through the infusion of vocational education funds. This would serve the dual purpose of strengthening existing institutions and providing programs for those historically neglected by the white land-grant/extension complex.

There is little indication historically that the 17 schools have been any more responsive to the needs of farmwomen as wage earners than have the "white" land-grant schools. Thus, the administration of an expanded program would need to pay special attention to sexual equality.

I do not suggest that these proposals will eliminate those rural problems that are amenable to educational remedies. Nor do I suggest that questions of the appropriate division of responsibility between public and private sectors will become any less difficult. But where appropriate institutions already exist, those who control vocational education funds might consider building on what already exists rather than seeking to duplicate facilities and programs.

There are no comparable institutions designed to serve the farmworkers, especially the migrant workers. Here, the problems are acute. Mechanization is displacing thousands of farmworkers every year. Yet, other opportunities -- in agriculture, rural industries, or cities -- are not opening up for them as rapidly as jobs are being eliminated. Here, vocational educations faces in acute form its limited abilities to help people enter the labor force. Job entry depends on the state of the economy more than on the state of vocational education. Yet, the farmworker population clearly needs as much aid as possible in making the transition to non-farm occupations.

Whatever programs might be developed for farmworkers, establishing equal access for women will be an important responsibility for those who implement such programs. A study conducted in Idaho, Texas, and New York by the Farmworkers' Women's Equity Project found significant sex discrimination within the farmworker organizations and the programs that they have developed.[33] Although the study did not address directly the issues of successful job placement in the larger economy, the New York study found that women fared worse than men in finding jobs and in salaries offered. Few women found jobs in non-traditional occupations. However, the willingness of farmworker organizations to study themselves and to document the unequal access of women to organization programs and to jobs within the organizations suggests that these groups might help vocational education efforts for women farmworkers.

All components of the study reported that people want occupational training as a means to a better way of life. And this is precisely what vocational education may not be able to provide to the farm population who need help most.

Peer Instruction: Farm Women as Vocational Educators

Farmwomen's problems, needs, aspirations, and perspectives have long been neglected by Government, by university researchers, and by educational institutions -- all of which have been supported by the tax revenues generated in part by women's labor. What reason is there to think that the situation has changed? Further, if educational institutions were given a mandate and funds to do more about the needs of farmwomen, would they be able to do the things that farmwomen need and want? These questions should be considered seriously by vocational schools and by Government agencies investing tax monies in programs for farmwomen. The major insight into farmwomen's problems is provided by farmwomen themselves. There are no experts in the conventional sense of degree-holders. Farmwomen have researched and grappled personally with the business problems of both farms and of women associated with farms. Therefore, it seems self-evident that vocational institutions should investigate the feasibility of ongoing programs of peer instruction by farmwomen for farmwomen. Such courses are likely to provide the highest quality information quickly and cost effectively.

In those areas of rural America where there are few vocational schools and where the high schools cannot be enlisted in vigorous adult education efforts, programs might be coordinated with the existing Extension Homemakers' Clubs. This suggestion is made with a certain trepidation.

The home economics side of extension, which organizes the Extension Homemakers' Clubs, has never dealt with the economic realities of women's roles as farm producers. The traditional sexual division of labor in the Extension Service has had little relation to actual sex-role differences on the farm. Thus, the "women's extension" has historically created a bureaucratic niche for itself by not treading on the turf of the "men's extension."

In the process, home economists have neglected most of the issues that now concern farmwomen as farmers. The problem for the Extension home economists now is that the world has changed and what they have traditionally offered is increasingly irrelevant. Thus, the problem for farmwomen is that "their" extension service is increasingly irrelevant to their roles as farmers. Yet, farmwomen still go to Homemakers' Clubs, if only as social gatherings and a way of maintaining relations with the neighbors. However, there is a structure of Extension Homemakers' Clubs in existence, and one cannot cavalierly abandon organizational structures without exploring the possibilities of putting them to more relevant uses. These clubs could become vehicles of peer instruction in farm management, estate planning, and career counseling. However, neighbors may have difficulty sharing information with farmwomen. The Extension Service might consider organizing a kind of speakers' bureau of farmwomen who could give talks at Extension expense to Homemakers' Clubs in other parts of their state. This would have the double advantage of providing information about similar types of farms covered by the same state laws without asking neighbors to

tell each other too much about themselves. In this effort, Extension would be well advised not to recruit from the larger farms only, but to include the various types of farms that are becoming characteristic of agrarian America.

Such an effort by the Extension Service would not be a substitute for vocational education and other forms of post-secondary education. However, the Homemakers' Clubs could inform women of the value and types of courses and seminars available in their local areas.

Peer instruction in vocational schools and community colleges would be invaluable. The faculty of these institutions -- even with recruitment -- could never furnish the expertise that farmwomen already have. Farmwomen could provide classroom instruction, participate in and help organize symposia, and offer ongoing counseling for other farmwomen. Farmwomen of different ages, from different types of farms, and having various levels of formal education could relate very effectively to other farmwomen. They can provide role models for coping with the changing conditions of rural America in ways that the faculties of the schools, however well-intentioned, cannot do.

Secondary schools, vocational schools, and community colleges might consider working with the local chapters of farmwomen's organizations such as Women Involved in Farm Economics, American Agri-Women, United Farm Wives, and the commodity organization auxiliaries. These organizations are growing rapidly in membership and visibility. They are actively involved with managerial problems, policy issues, and personal concerns that affect agriculture and women's roles in agriculture. And they are repositories of expertise on such issues.

A partnership between educational institutions and farmwomen not only would provide the highest quality education, but would prevent educational institutions from becoming retainers of rural industries. In other words, involving the clients of educational institutions as part of the faculty and administration of those institutions would help keep education focused on the needs of its clients rather than on the preferences of local power structures.

This proposal requires cooperation with existing institutions that already provide some form of occupation-related training to the agricultural population.

Beyond the Marketplace

During my research in the Middle West, I met several women who were accomplished writers and painters and many others who were looking for more in life than economics. Many of them attended evening or weekend classes at high schools or vocational schools, studying subjects ranging from Shakespeare to macrame. Some had even enrolled in a belly-dancing class. The University of Wisconsin at Plattville operates a very successful arts festival in the summer that is attended and supported by the surrounding rural population. All of

these undertakings are important in themselves. Suffice it to say that farmwomen are aware of their importance and look to educational institutions to provide a range of opportunities for self-fulfillment.

Humanistic offerings might include courses on women's history, particularly that of farm and rural women. This might be especially valuable in the high schools where it could provide young women with role models and self-identities linked with their backgrounds without necessarily suggesting that rural youths should not become urban adults. Such information would also interest adult farmwomen, who have been denied access to their own history as completely as other American women. Such offerings are not substitute for courses in business practice, farm management, farm production, women's legal and economic rights, and job counseling that should form the core of the vocational education offering for farmwomen. Yet, the historical courses would help women find their own identities, define their own problems, and seek a range of meaningful solutions. Even adults need role models, a sense that they are not alone and that their problems are not unique. The standard women's studies courses based largely on the life experiences of urban middle class women cannot give this same sense of identity and common struggle, as could courses built around farmwomen's own histories.

Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

Vocational education programs for farmwomen involve a cruel paradox: while they could help women who are already farm owner-operators, they do not seem to offer similar benefits for women farm laborers, women who work at off-farm jobs, and black women seeking to retain control of their land. This paradox should be recognized. However, vocational education can make worthwhile contributions. The challenge will be to eliminate sex-role stereotyping and to provide high-quality and useful information.

The larger critique of vocational education centers on its claims to be able to do things it cannot, in fact, do. This critique should be given serious consideration in the context of intensified rural industrialization. The design of vocational education programs in this context involves political choices. One would have greater enthusiasm for urging the expansion of vocational education programs in this area for farmwomen and for other sectors of the rural populations if the history of vocational education did not link it so clearly with labor discipline in the interest of the business community. In the case of "family farms" where the same persons are simultaneously capital and labor, these issues do not arise and useful programs for farmwomen owner-operators could potentially be developed.

The following policy recommendations are made in an attempt to consider the contributions of vocational programs for women in agriculture.

1. All programs should be evaluated in terms of the problems that are amenable to education remedies. Creating educational programs as ends in themselves is not the best use of public monies designed to enable people to live better lives.

2. Vocational programs should increase emphasis on general skills. Few people will perform the same tasks all their lives. This may be especially true of farmwomen who are adjusting off-farm employment to the needs of both farm and family.

3. Decisionmakers who create programs that teach specific job-related skills should define an appropriate balance between the responsibilities of the public and private sectors. Industries in a local area might be interested in funding part of the public vocational education effort.

4. Farmwomen's roles as farmers should be recognized and courses offered in production, marketing, and farm management.

5. Farm management courses should deal with women's unique legal and cultural problems in their roles as farmowners and operators.

6. Farmwomen should be seen as dual career women with responsibilities both on the farm and to an off-farm job.

7. Vocational programs should be more sensitive to the controversies surrounding agricultural production, marketing, and management and not simply replicate the efforts of the land-grant/extension complex. Working with citizen panels from the areas -- with women strongly represented -- would help avoid the dissemination of irrelevant or counter-productive approaches.

8. Wherever possible, vocational education efforts should be coordinated with existing programs and institutions. The historically black land-grant colleges founded in the 1890's could play an important role.

9. Vocational programs should be coordinated with successful projects in alternative agricultural techniques. Funds might be provided to these projects to train people locally.

10. Farmwomen's vocational programs should utilize peer instruction.

11. Some programs on farmwomen's history and current situations -- as women, as farmers, and as members of kinship-linked businesses -- should be provided.

12. Equal access for women is not the only issue, but it remains fundamental. Those who design, implement, and administer vocational education programs should ensure that equal access is a reality.

Notes

1. See Frances Hill, American Women on the Family Farm (forthcoming). This research was supported by grants from the Rockefeller Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

2. Classic examples of this genre of scholarship are Louis Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life," American Journal of Sociology, Vol, 44, No. 1 (July 1938) and Noel P. Gist and Carroll D. Clark, "Intelligence as a Selective Factor in Rural-Urban Migration," American Journal of Sociology, 44 (July, 1938)

3. This helps account for the hostile reaction of farm women to the Report of the National Advisory Council on Women's Educational Programs, "Educational Needs of Rural Women and Girls" (January 1977). Several women whom I interviewed had been at the Wisconsin hearings held in the preparation of this Report. Farm women from other parts of the country attending the 1977 Annual Convention of American Agri-Women expressed similar sentiments about the portrayal of farm and rural women.

4. Lord Frederick Lugard, The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, Ltd., 1929).

5. This legal tendency concerns farm women a great deal. An elderly farm woman in Iowa said, after having explained how they had transferred their extensive land holdings to their sons to avoid estate taxes: "What if I have to go to a nursing home? I'm an old lady. I couldn't sue my children if they didn't pay for my care."

6. Lindsay Jones, the founder of the Agricultural Marketing Project, is one of the country's leading experts on direct marketing but the land grant complex has been largely uninterested in what she and her co-workers have learned from their successful efforts.

7. Beryl Stanton of the staff of the American Institute of Cooperation feels that attention to women's needs and interests on the part of cooperatives has been intermittent and always somewhat supplementary. The debate over whether there should be separate programs for women or whether women should simply participate in the regular activities of the organization has yet to be resolved. Some advocates of separate programs defend them as means of integrating women into the main organization.

8. Department of Commerce, Historical Statistics of the United States, p. 465. For state-level data see the 1959 Census of Agriculture, State Table 3 and the 1974 Census of Agriculture, State Data, Table 3. See also: W.E.B. DuBois, "The Negro Farmer," Special Reports of the Census Office, Supplementary

Analysis and Derivative Tables of the 1900 Census (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1906). The situation has worsened since publication of the 1973 study, Only Six Million Acres: The Decline of Black-Owned Land in the Rural South (New York: The Black Economic Research Center, 1973).

9. Leo McGee and Robert Boone (Eds.), The Black Rural Landowner -- Endangered Species: Social, Political, and Economic Implications (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood-Press, 1975) and J.R. Mandle, The Roots of Black Poverty: The Southern Plantation Economy After the Civil War (Durham: Duke University Press, 1975). The contributions of federal agricultural and labor policies to the decline of black land ownership is discussed in Frances Hill, "Agricultural Policy and Class Formation in the South," (Austin, Texas: The University of Texas, 1978).

10. "Heirs property" gives each heir of the original owner an indivisible share of the property. Should any one of the potentially hundreds of heirs want compensation for his or her share, the property must be sold in its entirety. The Emergency Land Fund, headed by Joe Brooks, has attempted to deal with the problem of heirs property by bidding competitively against the land speculators who instigate public auctions of this land. The Emergency Land Fund has had some notable successes and has put land speculators on notice that, to some degree, the world has changed. Yet, the amount of capital that would be required for black farmers to buy their farms a second time seems unattainable. See Joseph Brooks, The Emergency Land Fund: A Rural Land Retention and Development Model," in McGee and Boone, The Black Rural Landowner.

11. The major work on women in the rural labor force in Jeanne M. O'Leary and David L. Brown, "Labor Force Activity of Women in Metropolitan and Nonmetropolitan America" (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1979).

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. Wariness of including the wives in "brothers" partnerships and corporations seems to be an important source of instability in these arrangements as well as of tension within nuclear families. Women are just beginning to share their anxiety about these business arrangements that seem frequently to exclude them completely. A Wisconsin woman described how her husband had signed a set of corporate by-laws with his father and brothers that required his wife, should she outlive her husband, to sell his stock in the corporation to his surviving male relatives at the stock's 1976 value. Her husband never told her about this arrangement. She found out only when she came across the by-laws in the desk and read them. She feels betrayed as a wife and as a co-worker since she and their children do the milking every day.

15. The economic value of time spent in labor on the farm and off the farm is analyzed in Wallace Huffman, "The Productive Value of Human Time in U.S. Agriculture," Journal of Agricultural Economics (November 1976) and "The Value of the Productive Time of Farmers: Iowa, North Carolina, and Oklahoma," Journal of Agricultural Economics (December 1976).

16. These data are, at best, suggestive. The Census definition of agricultural workers has been as changeable as that of farms. It is not clear under what circumstances women are counted if their husbands are also employed on the same farm. The numbers of undocumented workers can only be estimated.

17. Robert Coles, Children of Crisis: Migrants, Mountaineers, and Sharecroppers, Vol. 2 (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1972). Robert Coles and Jean Hollowell Coles, Women of Crisis (New York: Delacorte, 1978). See also the classic study of conditions in in California, originally published in 1939, Carey McWilliams, Factories in the Fields (New York: Peregrine Press, 1971).

18. A brief history of unionization attempts is given in George L. Baker, "The Invisible Workers: Labor Organization on American Farms," in Richard Merrill (Ed.), Radical Agriculture (New York: Harper, 1976).

19. Hightower and DeMarco, op. cit.

20. Ralph Barlowe and John Timmons, "What Has Happened to the Agricultural Ladder?" Journal of Farm Economics (February 1950). The myth that workers could expect to become owners if they embodied the capitalist virtues is obviously a useful means of preventing indiscipline or the development of an identity as a permanent proletarian.

21. Lester C. Thurow, "Vocational Education as a Strategy for Eliminating Poverty," in The National Institute of Education, The Planning Papers for the Vocational Education Study (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1979) and John Walsh, "Vocational Education: Education or Short-Run Training Program?" in ibid. W. Norton Grubb, "The Phoenix of Vocational Education: Implications Evaluation," in ibid. W. Norton Grubb and Marvin Lazerson, "Rally 'Round the Workplace: Continuities and Fallacies in Career Education," Harvard Educational Review, 45 (Fall, 1975)

22. Nancy Smiedl, former President of Wisconsin Women for Agriculture, commented on the exclusion of women from the production-related programs in the agricultural colleges and the problems that this created for women who wanted to farm either on their own or with their husbands.

23. Luther Tweeten, "Rural Development Linked to Education" (unpublished) suggests that education by itself can provide few opportunities. A meaningful education program must be part of the broad rural development strategy that actually increases the number of jobs available.

24. I was the moderator at this session and several others on the roles of rural women.

25. Grubb and Lazerson, "Rally 'Round the Workplace."

26. On social discipline in an early phase of capitalism, see E.P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class (London: Victor Gollanez, 1963).

27. On the concept of a "good business climate" and the public policies used to establish it, see David Perry and Alfred Watkins (Eds.), The Rise of the Sunbelt Cities (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1977)

28. The sage of the land grant colleges and the extension service is chronicled and analyzed in Grant McConnell, The Decline of Agrarian Democracy (New York: Artheneum, 1969).

29. Jim Hightower and Susan DeMarco, Hard Tomatoes, Hard Times: A Report of the Agribusiness Accountability Project on the Failure of America's Land Grant College Complex (Cambridge: Schenkman, 1973).

30. Several of these projects are discussed in Roger Blobaum, "Rural America: A Micro-Prospective Analysis," Paper prepared for a Symposium organized by the National Educational Institute for Economic Development at Annapolis, Maryland, March 2-4, 1980. The Office of Technology Assessment of the Congress has reviewed several of the major projects under a program entitled "Assessment of Technology for Local Development: A Survey of Community-Based Technological Choices in Selected Communities." For an economic and technical assessment of several alternative technologies, see Roger Blobaum, "Alternatives to Energy Intensive Agriculture," a paper presented at the 34th Annual Meeting of the Soil Conservation Society of America, Ottawa, Canada (July 29-August 1, 1979).

31. One now-famous example of such behavior on the part of the land grant colleges was the attempt of the College of Agriculture of the University of Nebraska to stop the Community Services Administration from funding the Small Farm Energy Project of the Center for Rural Affairs. This project, directed by Roger Blobaum, became one of the most successful projects of its type. The project was saved from the university only by the timely intervention of the Governor of Nebraska.

32. For information on the 1890's programs, I am grateful to Dr. MaKinley Mayes, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

33. The Community Services Administration has two reports available on the Farmworkers Women's Equity Project of 1978-79. One report was prepared by Rural New York Farmworkers Opportunities, Inc. and the other was prepared by the Idaho Migrant Council, Inc.

IV. They'd Never Hire a Girl: Vocational Education in Rural Secondary Schools

by Faith Dunne

> Those who have a home which they can make happy, will not sigh for contact with the outer world, to be permitted to wrestle and contend among its fierce trials and fiercer spirits that struggle there for daily bread; ... or reject the gentle ties of wife, mother, sister, to study some learned profession, and rush into those haunts and paths already too crowded with the sterner sex. Such must be the lot, nevertheless, of many women, whom necessitous circumstances have forced into an unnatural position.
>
> -- New Cyclopedia of Domestic Economy, 1892

> They'd never hire a girl. Most girls could not cope with getting under a car and getting cold in winter. They wouldn't like it that most garages don't have adequate toilet facilities.... We need to give girls life skills. What this school needs for girls is a program in basic household skills -- basic cooking, so they don't serve so many TV dinners. There's a lot of that now, since so many wives work.
>
> -- Rural High School Principal, Southern New Hampshire, 1980

Much has changed in rural America in the last 100 years. But the paradoxes that dominate the lives of rural women have altered little. Rural women have always worked harder than their urban sisters; from 19th century women's magazines through 20th century sociological studies, the report has consistently shown relentless labor in the house and in the fields. Simultaneously, the notion has persisted that rural women are too "gentle," too delicate, to take on productive work outside the home. Even today, there is a strong sense in many rural communities that the "good" woman finds her fulfillment as a wife and mother, and that only "necessitous circumstances" should propel her into the labor market.

Parts of this conception are breaking down in the face of changing rural life styles and a changing American society. Farming is no longer the common rural enterprise, and the need for women to work as unpaid farm laborers has therefore diminished. Mass media and interstate highway systems have whetted the appetites of rural people for consumer goods and urban amenities, and these appetites, in many cases, can only be fulfilled by a second income. Rural women, to varying degrees, have come to share with their urban counterparts a desire for the kind of independence and self-fulfillment that comes with a career outside the home. And the general pressures of inflation, increasing energy costs, and modern family instability have forced many rural women into the labor market, whether they want to be there or not.

But if parts of the old concept of a "woman's place" have broken down, other parts remain intact. "Necessitous circumstances" have come to be more broadly defined, and a wider range of women now feel that they can or must go out to work among the "fiercer spirits" of the opposite sex. But, for many rural women, "contact with the outside world" has compounded the paradox, not resolved it. The majority of non-farm rural women are adding wage-earning labor to their home responsibilities. They are now permitted by a liberalized society to keep house, tend the garden, raise the children, help their husbands, and bring in a portion of the family income, besides. However, they are still not supposed to compete with men for jobs with higher wages or more autonomy, nor are they encouraged to expect their husbands to share in the household tasks for which the wage-earning wife is still responsible.

This situation presents a clear challenge to vocational education program planners. Since rural women are in fact entering the labor market in ever-increasing numbers, they will need training to help them get and keep the jobs they want. But this is not a simple enterprise. A good vocational program for rural women is up against a variety of competing forces: the pressure of traditional community value structures; the stereotyping of rural jobs; the concerns of rural women about their own capacities. To provide occupational training for country-bred women without considering the multiple demands made upon them is to render a disservice. Out-of-context programs will provide recipients only an illusion of access to meaningful and productive work. Rural women deserve more than illusions.

This chapter intends to provide a context for thinking about appropriate vocational programs for rural women. It considers the present status of rural women at home and in the labor market; it examines typical vocational education programs intended to meet their needs; and it proposes ways in which secondary schools could provide them with more appropriate occupational preparation.

There are few studies of rural vocational education, and even those few deal almost exclusively with men. An extensive search failed to unearth a single specific study of vocational education

programs for rural women; one would be hard pressed to find a subject less researched.

Nevertheless, this paper is based on a review of the existing research, augmented by data from two sources: the 1976-78 "Profile of Occupational Interests" (POI) study, a multi-regional study of rural high school students in five areas of the United States; and some informal interviews conducted early in 1980, which tapped the views of administrators, counselors, teachers, and students at eight secondary schools in Vermont and New Hampshire. The schools chosen represented a variety of types within the geographical constraints imposed by limitations in time and money. (See Appendix I for a more complete description.) They covered a range of sizes, levels of commitment to vocational programs, local availability of jobs for vocational graduates, and the extent of metropolitan influence on community life. These data are suggestive rather than conclusive, but they indicate possible trends and some promising directions for further research.

* * *

"The boys calls me Annabelle Hatchet," she announces with a proud grin, "because I was cuttin' down trees faster than they were. We make the guys in here look sick!" Janet is in the first year of a two-year Vocational Agriculture program at her regional high school in Vermont. She is one of five girls in a class of 12. Her teacher encourages girls to do the same work in forestry, logging, sugaring, horticulture, dairy production, and farm management units that boys do and is delighted with Janet's performance. While he concedes that "some employers might be prejudiced," he urges girls to take pride in their achievements; he says, "I tell a girl: you've got it -- you sell it!" He, too, notes that Janet's skill with an ax is superior to some of the male students'; in fact, her swing has become somewhat legendary, and even the principal talks about it.

Janet is scornful of her classmates who are "just in for credit." According to her, two of the girls and "some guys" fit that description; she speaks with pity of the girl who "even lives on a farm and couldn't tell the parts of a chicken on our test last week." Janet herself takes such tests seriously. She signed up for Vo-Ag because she helps care for livestock on her father's small farm at home and she wanted to learn about diseases. "Say you got a sick calf; you learn what to do for it.... If you got trouble at home with an animal, this'll help you figure it out.". She is particularly interested in horses; she has broken and trained several and plans to make money by giving trail rides this summer.

Janet's two best girlfriends also enrolled in Vo-Ag because they like caring for animals; one would like to have a pet shop someday, and the other dreams of living "on a ranch out West."

But Janet's plans are more specific: she knows she wants to farm in Vermont. Her father, grandfather, and great-grandfather have all been farmers, and she is the only one of eight children in the family who wants to continue. She has been paying particular attention to the coursework in farm management, "keeping accounts and all that"; she expects this to be useful in her future because her father "thinks he knows it all already." And though her father has given her a few acres, she doesn't really want to stay around his place. "I want to get my own place," she says firmly, "and build it up."

Janet's boyfriend has other ideas. He think she should settle down and raise a family when she graduates next year; then he can support them working as a trucker. While Janet would like to have kids, especially because "they would help with chores," she wants the farm first. "I figure," she says, "if girls settle down and raise a family, they won't do what they want to do." She doesn't want to be "tied down to kids -- kids take a lot of money." She also knows that children would be a time-consuming responsibility; she speaks with horror of the way she's seen babysitters treat kids, and says she would never leave any of her own with hired sitters. She's not so sure she could care for kids and run her farm while her man is out driving a truck, but she sees a solution. "I think," she says hopefully, "that he'll come round to farming. I think I can get him round to farming."

* * *

The Lives of Rural Women: Dealing With Dilemmas

It is difficult and dangerous to make broad generalizations about any group, including rural women. There are more than 25 million of them, representing every race, ethnic group, social class, and economic situation. Their skills are more diverse than those of urban women as a result of the geographical insularity which has maintained unique rural subcultures in an increasingly homogeneous and metropolitan nation. The FOI research found that regional differences among women were as significant as differences between social classes, and even between sexes. This kind of variation makes global assessments suspect. Nevertheless, as a group, rural women do have some common tendencies, recurrent qualities with which the educational policy planners must grapple.

There are implicit contradictions in the lives and attitudes of most groups of women, but rural women seem to have carried these contradictions to an extreme. The myth of womanly delicacy and the fact of female competence are both embedded in rural culture, and both are factors when women plan their lives. For example, rural women are

very family-oriented, and tend to be quite traditional in their view of the appropriate roles of wives and mothers.[1] They perceive themselves as "helpmates" to their husbands, attentive mothers to their children, and good neighbors who help friends and relatives in difficult times.[2] They are not particularly interested in legislated equality; Larson's[3] review of the literature on rural attitudes found that more than half of the nation's rural women feel that ERA is either unnecessary or inappropriate.

At the same time, however, rural women are very career-oriented. They have high educational aspirations and, generally, high achievement levels: the average educational level of the white rural woman is equal to that of her urban sister and her male counterpart, while minority rural women generally acquire more schooling than rural minority men.[4] Further, the young women tend to plan prolonged work lives and often aspire to careers which would require extended commitment, such as veterinary medicine, accounting, and business management.[5]

This would not be paradoxical if two different age groups were under consideration here -- if, for example, older women saw themselves as traditional homemakers, while younger women were eager for more "liberated" lives. But this does not seem to be the case. The census statistics indicate that increasing numbers of rural women in <u>all</u> age groups (including young mothers in the 20-34 age category) are moving into the labor force in record numbers.[6] And a group of women, recently convened by Lyndon State College in the remote "Northeast Kingdom" region of Vermont in December 1977, to explore the vocational needs of adult women, called the problem of re-entry homemakers one of the most pressing issues facing the female population of that area.

Further, the young rural women seem very nearly as traditional in their orientation as their mothers and aunts. The POI research found that high school girls expected to work, but that they also expected to run their households singlehandedly.[7] In fact, they expected less help from husbands than their male peers declared themselves ready to provide. Our interviews confirmed the survey findings. Nearly every girl interviewed planned to work and to manage a home with little or no help. "The man would feel awkward," one girl explained. "It's the way you're brought up. Girls do dishes, boys do wood and garbage." Some of these young women expressed some ambivalence about the traditional division of roles, but most expected that custom would triumph. As one girl put it, "A husband should help, but I don't think mine will. It depends on what he's like. He might be lazy, or tired from work. I will, too, I guess, but it's got to be done. Mostly, it'll be me ... he probably won't." This young woman has no particular husband in mind; she was reflecting her expectations of men as a general group.

Thus, rural women of all ages seem to envision themselves as both wage-earners and homemakers, with little expressed consideration

of what this combination is likely to cost them. At the Lyndon State College conference there were indications that older women are less likely than young women to construct a fantasy in which they put up twelve quarts of tomatoes in the morning and perform brain surgery in the afternoon. On the other hand, neither do they seem to sense the difficulty in being a full-time wage earner and a full-time homemaker simultaneously, especially in rural areas where services are scarce and most outside activities require extended travel.

The homemaker/worker issue is not the only dilemma with which rural women must deal. Their actual position in the labor market confronts them with another paradox. When young rural women talk about working, they speak of jobs as a source of satisfaction -- according to the POI research, to a far greater degree than young men -- with no apparent reason for this attitude.

In spite of their high educational attainments and aspirations, rural women are concentrated in the least satisfying jobs in terms of stimulation, responsibility, or income. O'Leary's study found that fully 25 percent of rural women are employed as operatives in nondurable manufacturing -- jobs in processing plants of various kinds which represent some of life's most tedious and unpleasant occupations. Further, these unattractive jobs are rarely redeemed either by high pay or the prospect of promotion. According to O'Leary, the mean earnings of full-time rural female workers in 1976 was only $6,590, half that of their male counterparts and $1,000 less than their urban sisters. And rural women are likely to end their work lives where they began them: at the bottom of the career ladder. As one business teacher in a northern New Hampshire town said, "All jobs for women in this area are minimum wage, no matter what their education or experience. There is little chance fopr advancement. Women bank tellers have been there 10 and 20 years without promotions. A man will work there less than three years and get moved up."

The young rural woman, therefore, seems to be boxed in before she makes her first move into the labor market. She has learned to be a fine, supportive, responsible wife and mother; she has learned to want a productive career; she has learned to look for satisfying work as part of her identity. And she has also learned that women cannot get those kinds of jobs. In this context, it is not surprising that rural women have diffuse, sometimes contradictory, notions about what they will do with their lives. It is only surprising that they manage to plan at all.

The Status of Rural Women in the Labor Market: Reasons and Rationalizations

The unenviable position of women in the rural labor market is due to a number of underlying causes. First, the rural economic structure tends to be relatively simple and undiversified.[8] In addition to farming -- traditionally a male preserve -- most rural communities offer one or two primary employers. Characteristically, the major employment opportunities are highly sex-stereotyped: mining,

fishing, logging, and heavy machine industries hire men, while textile factories, food packing plants, and plastics companies hire women. When the local industry hires both males and females, again the jobs tend to be sex stereotyped within the organization.[9] And, almost invariably, the "women's jobs" offer less pay, fewer chances for promotion, and less autonomy than do the jobs held by men. This means that, in most rural communities, women have either little opportunity for "meaningful" employment, or abundant, low-level opportunities.

In our interviews, we asked, "Where do women around here work?" and the responses were consistent: "Part-time, in menial jobs"; "At the rubber plant"; "At the plastics factory." There were few equally consistent answers for men, even though their labor market is also limited by the constraints of the rural economy.

Some of the occupational sex stereotyping comes from the nature of rural work. Many of the stereotyped "men's jobs" require a great deal of physical strength which women either lack, or are presumed to lack. One rural principal pointed out in an interview that "a 25-year old man is going to be able to lift more a 25-year old woman can, on the average," and that this difference is significant in a logging camp. The emphasis on strength in several rural occupations encourages sex stereotyping, and tends to discourage women from considering other male-stereotyped occupations which might be readily manageable.

Although some rural jobs have qualities that encourage sex-stereotyping, most occupational discrimination stems from community and employer attitudes (as it does in metropolitan areas), rather than from anything inherent in the job itself. Even the most optimistic of vocational education teachers see real problems in the marketplace for unconventionally trained women. One vocational agriculture teacher, who takes a very positive approach toward training and placing women in agriculture-related fields, still feels he has to hedge his hopeful assertions: "If the employer is somewhat up-to-date, he'll hire a girl. A girl has as much chance as a boy to be hired today. But ... the employer might be prejudiced. He might like a boy in mechanics -- figures he's had a car, fooled around with it -- where he might hire a girl in horticulture or something."

Most of the teachers, administrators, and students interviewed were far more pessimistic. Many agreed with the young woman who said, "No girl would be hired before a guy, no matter what the situation. My father owns a garage and he would never hire a girl, even if she was the best in the class."

Employment -- in traditional or untraditional occupations -- does not end the working rural woman's problems. Access to transportation, to child care, and to stores and services is more difficult for rural women than for their urban counterparts. The lack of adequate day care is particularly acute in some rural areas. In central Vermont, one teacher told us, many mothers "go on welfare

instead of working because they don't want to leave their kids alone," and can't find a reliable person to look after them.

Traditionally, rural women compensated for scarce services and poor transportation through a mutual support network.[10] But the old custom of "neighboring" has begun to break down, as its members move into the workforce. A young mother cannot take her neighbor's kids after school if she works the 3-to-11 PM shift at the local nursing home. Mom can't cook for her daughter's husband and children if she waits on tables at the resort every evening. Thus, many rural women are forced to choose between poverty and family neglect -- a painful decision for any person, and a heartrendering choice for the family-oriented rural women.

As a final paradox, the external problems posed by the nature of the rural labor market and the scarcity of services in the country are exacerbated by the problems of rural women's internal attitudes toward their own futures. Although teachers and counselors feel, as one put it, that "attitudes are changing -- there's more career orientation today," marriage remains a priority for young women, and traditional rural values compel the marriage-oriented young rural women to be ready to drop career plans at any point.

Since many do not know who or when they will marry they tend to perceive their futures as uncertain and dominated by the random whims of fate. As a result, one vocational coordinator says, high school girls talk about a career,[11] but actually "think in terms of a "job." "Boys think in terms of extended careers." Even young women with substantial ambitions see marriages as an impediment to sucess over which they have no control. One high school junior, who says that she wants to be a social worker, was asked what factors could stand between her and her goal. "Getting married," she replied, promptly. "If I get married first, I can't go on to school."

This tentative attitude toward the future may be one reason why some female students see little point in investing time, money, and emotional commitment in training which may be abandoned at any moment. It makes more sense, as one assistant principal notes, for a girl to "latch on and get married" while in high school. Then, at least, she can feel (however temporarily) that something about her future is determined.

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"I love this stuff!" cries Jill, waving her hands at the bustling children of the Quantity Foods Progam during lunchtime. "I love all of it -- learning about cooking, serving, the management. It's really, really interesting." Quantity Foods is a 2-year program, but Jill enrolled in her senior year. "I wish I'd gotten into this earlier," she says. "I wish I'd started before, I would have loved to go on."

Now, however, she feels it is too late; she is five months

pregnant. "Now that I'm married, with my baby coming -- well, I'll stay home after the baby comes." She thinks she might work sometime, maybe after her child goes to school, but she has no definite plans. She doesn't think she is qualified to do much in food trades, in spite of her enthusiasm for her current course. Two years ago, she was enrolled in the Office Occupations program, but dropped out of school and has only returned to finish this year.

As evidence of the real potential of the Quantity Foods program, Jill points to two of her classmates, two young men who plan to start their own restaurants after further training at Culinary Arts Institutes. "They're really going to do well," she says. "I mean, I love this, but I didn't start soon enough. But at least I'll be able to cook for my family."

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Vocational Programs in Rural High Schools: The Basics

Federally funded vocational education for rural youth began in 1917, when the Smith-Hughes Act authorized the expenditure of $7.2 million for occupational preparation. In the countryside, these funds were focused on two programs; vocational agriculture, which got fully half the allocated funds and home economics, whose funding was split with the more urban-oriented trades and industries programs. Since 1917, five more acts, each with subsequent amendments, have succeeded the Smith-Hughes legislation. But the primacy of the VoAg and Home Ec programs in rural secondary schools has never been challenged.

Today, with only 11 percent of rural residents engaged in farming and 49 percent of rural women in the labor market, this emphasis seems odd. But traditions are strong in rural schools and the communities that support them. Several high school teachers and vocational education directors voiced sentiments similar to those of the New Hampshire principal, who said, "The community is fond of the Aggie program, refuses to change it. We've been FFA (Future Farmers of America) champs 11 times in 13 years."

Furthermore, both agriculture programs and consumer and homemaking education courses have been modified overthe last ten years, in response to constraints of both the job market and Title IX. Some of these changes are access-oriented -- one school, for example, abolished a rule that barred girls from the Future Farmers of America club; another renamed the cooking classes "Culinary Arts" in a successful effort to recruit young men. Other modifications were more engaged with content. For instance, in some schools, the home economics programs (as they are still called in most rural schools) have devised classes to prepare young people for restaurant and institutional cooking occupations.

Agriculture programs have broadened their focus to the point where the national FFA can claim that since one-third of the jobs in America are agriculture-related, agriculture is the natural all-conclusive vocational education program. Whether or not that claim seems plausible, it is clear that many VoAg programs are broader than they once were. In addition to the dairy and forestry programs characteristic of northern New England agriculture programs, schools selected for this study offered, under the general heading of "Vocational Agriculture," everything from greenhouse management to small business practices. Partly as a result of these changes, there are places where the sex-stereotyping usually typical of these programs has broken down. There are some girls in most VoAg programs, and some boys in Home Ec classes, such as Culinary Arts. Nevertheless, the tendency toward sex-oriented courses persists and, since in many schools these two programs are the dominant form of occupational preparation, they perpetuate the model for occupational sex-stereotyping which mirrors and reinforces the stereotyping tendencies of the community.

If the Smith-Hughes Act laid the foundation for sex-stereotyped vocational education, more recent legislation has unwittingly encouraged it. The Vocational Education Act for 1963 (and its amendments through 1976) was intended to encourage the achievement of sex equity. However, the call for program evaluation has instead promoted the maintenance and development of inequitable programs, especially in traditional communities.

As long as vocational education programs are evaluated by the number of graduates they place, the best guarantee for success is to prepare young men and women for the kinds of jobs traditionally considered "sex-appropriate." To mount unconventional programs is to court failure. Given the limitations on the training capacities of secondary-level vocational centers, this kind of evaluation has a particularly negative effect on the training of women. Many of the higher income women's occupations (such as nursing or elementary school teaching) require training beyond the secondary level. But as one occupational home economics teacher complained, she hesitates to encourage her better vocational students to go on for more training, because "going on to school is not placement," and entry level placement is the gauge of success.

This form of evaluation obviously works against young men in some instances, too. However, the entry-level positions in typical "men's occupations" are generally superior to those available to women, and, therefore, the effect on men is not as negative.

Beyond VocAg and HomeEc: Polarizing Programs and the Myth of "Nice Mix"

In the small rural high school, vocational programs are restricted in both size and scope. The smallest schools selected for this study (with enrollments ranging from 100 to 261 in grades 9 through 12) tended to offer only two or three programs, generally the stan-

dard vocational agriculture and home economics package, plus either business skills or some form of industrial arts. Larger schools, especially those drawing students to their vocational programs from very small high schools in the surrounding areas, offered more programs, frequently adding courses of study in distributive education, child care, machine tool drafting, or food services. The Area Vocational Centers, with more federal funds and broader selection of students, tended to offer the standard programs plus courses requiring substantial investment in equipment, such as building trades, metal trades, printing and graphics, auto mechanics, and health occupations.

It is clear that students at the larger and more specialized schools have greater choices in vocational training. But it is equally clear that, in sex-stereotyping terms, those choices are nearly as restricted for the student at the Area Vocational Center as they are for the young person enrolled in a tiny rural high school.

This situation is not uniquely rural. As Rieder[12] points out, vocational programs nationally "faithfully mirror the occupational segregation by sex in the labor force." But rural women, already embedded in an extremely sex-stereotyped culture, seem less likely than their urban sisters to hurdle the barriers protecting male-dominated occupations. Thus, training opportunities which polarize the sexes are very likely to accentuate the channeling of young rural women into the most traditional female jobs.

Several vocational staff members noted that it is very difficult to persuade girls to enter unconventional programs. One vocational director attributed this difficulty to "sex biases of the family and inadvertent sex biases of the staff." Others, including students, singled out the peer group as a particularly powerful force in maintaining traditional sex-role images. Virtually every teacher and counselor interviewed had stories of girls who wanted to try auto mechanics, or forestry, or agriculture, "but her boyfriend vetoed it," and there was substantial agreement that unconventional enrollments required peer approval and support. "It's difficult to get them started," one counselor commented. "If they had a friend or a few girls in it, it would be okay, but they're afraid to intrude on male territory on their own."

For the girls who stay in their "own territory," the opportunities are very limited. The "Office Skills" courses generally offered by small high schools prepare their graduates for only the lowest level clerical positions. In many places, these graduates are readily employable; school personnel tended to agree with the guidance counselor who said that "a lot of companies like rural students and their high moral values." But the jobs they get -- as bank tellers, bookkeepers, typists in small offices -- do not lead to either advancement or good pay. Employers like to hire polite, hard-working rural girls, who wear skirts instead of blue jeans and get to work on time, but they don't like to pay them more than minimum wage. There are good jobs, even within the clerical field, for which these young

women could be trained, as legal, medical, or executive secretaries. But, even if such training were provided, the local labor market could not absorb such specialized personnel.

Health care programs are similarly limited in the skills they can teach. The well-paid jobs, the jobs with mobility, all require postsecondary training. The graduate with only a secondary health program background is employable only in low-level, dead-end jobs. While there are also limits to the employment opportunities for graduates of male-stereotyped secondary vocational programs, they are both broader in range and more lucrative than those for women.

Business and health care programs prepare their graduates for low-level work, but the alternative female-stereotyped programs prepare most of their students for no paid work at all. Consumer and homemaking education (C&HE), which is not considered an occupational program by the federal government, was the primary vocational resource for girls in the high schools visited. The teachers in these programs frequently made significant efforts to relate their courses to the interests of their students — male and female -- but their reforms led them toward students more likely to enhance the quality of life than the quality of income.

A number of C&HE teachers interviewed have launched successful "Marriage and the Family" courses, which tended, as one teacher put it, "to change a lot of minds about getting married right after high school -- they begin questioning when we come to the part about budgeting." Other teachers have career orientation and life planning units built into the curriculum. This kind of learning undoubtedly has a useful function in women's career development, but it does not provide the high school graduate with marketable skills, nor is it intended to.

Child care programs, which are technically occupationally oriented, do not appear much more likely to enhance employability than C&HE courses. Rural communities rarely offer formal day-care programs (even though many need them badly), and the typical child-care program does not offer the small business management training necessary to enable a young woman to start a center of her own. Thus, many of the young women enrolled in such programs agreed with the girl who said, "I knew I wanted to be a mother and I thought this program would prepare me." Only a few harbored visions of starting day-care centers or well-child centers, but they did not seem to have the practical expertise to realize their dreams.

Thus, the young woman enrolled in the traditional female-oriented programs finds herself trained either for a low-level job or for no job at all. Those who want more must go on for further education, or they must "rush into those haunts and paths already too crowded with the sterner sex," and compete with boys in male-dominated vocational programs. Some do. But, the data suggest, not many.

According to a statistical analysis done by the National Organi-

zation of Women-sponsored Project on Equal Education Rights (PEER) on 1978 data, women constituted a maximum of 20 percent of the enrollments in traditionally male-dominated programs, but only in Michigan and Washington. In the more rural states, the percentages ranged from 5.2 percent in Arkansas to 9.5 percent in Vermont, both below the national average of 11 percent. Further, these figures include postsecondary vocational training, which tends to draw more women into nontraditional programs; the percentages are probably lower at the secondary level.

These statistics were supported by our interview results. While there are some programs, particularly in agriculture, which have high proportions of girls, most of the traditionally male programs are overwhelmingly masculine in enrollments and in what some teachers and administrators call "flavor."

In this context, a girl had to be either highly motivated or rather frivolous to enroll in a traditionally male program. Among the young women interviewed, there were both. The highly motivated generally had very specific plans for the application of their skills. Several of the girls in vocational agriculture said they were planning to take over family farms. Others believed that a male-dominated occupation was the best route out of a constricting environment. "I'd like to go to different states and different corporations," one female metal trades student said. "I want to get into bigger places, see the world."

This kind of vision seems to give some young women the capacity to focus on an attractive future, enabling them to ignore a present in which they are often teased by the boys, sometimes condescended to by the teachers, and occasionally actively discouraged by the response of their communities. "Everyone in my town was really shocked," the outwardly mobile metal trades student said of her decision to enter the program. "My parents thought at first that I was really out on a limb, taking on too much. Now they say, 'Just so long as you're happy.'"

Those girls who enrolled in non-traditional programs for frivolous reasons seemed willing to ignore their own capacities to do the work required. Two girls in a New Hampshire high school's building trades program said they picked that program because "our boyfriends were taking it and our friends said we wouldn't dare." Besides, "it gets us out of school in the afternoon." Their teacher declared that "in many cases, the girls are outperforming the boys," and the vocational director of the school said, "Those girls are tough — perfectly willing to deal with physical challenge." But the girls themselves rejected any notion of using their skills to earn a living. As one said: "There's too much prejudice around here to choose a man's job. I've heard too many stories about how women are treated."

It is clear that stereotyped programs have built-in problems for young women, whether they follow the traditional or the unconventional

training route. It would seem logical, therefore, to create more sex-neutral programs which would offer a broad range of relatively high-level opportunities to both sexes without requiring young women to surmount barriers which do not face young men. This, however, is easier to propose than to implement.

At present, only a handful of programs -- distributive education, food services, plus an occasional business course and printing or graphics programs -- ever has what vocational directors like to call a "nice mix." And even this mix is often illusory. Within the "nicely" mixed" programs, students are often resegregated by sex: in a typical business program, for example, the typing and shorthand courses will be entirely female, while the accounting and management classes have more males. This resegregation reflects different visions of the future. As one business teacher said, boys take business courses "mostly for their own personal use -- to keep books in business." The girls look to office skills for their livelihood; the boys, on the other hand, see these skills as a useful tool in a more complex occupation.

These differences in perception persist even when boys and girls take the same classes. Food services programs are frequently mentioned as a "well-mixed" program, often predominantly male, but with women moving up in enrollments. But the girls who enroll in these programs tend to have very different motivations from those of the boys. In one group of students we interviewed, the boys reported plans to "have my own restaurant," and "to open my own place -- something seasonal," while the girls said they had enrolled in the courses because "I couldn't cook at all," or because they wanted to prepare for married life. Thus, there is separation even in the most apparently sex-neutral programs.

Creating genuinely mixed programs appears to be difficult, especially in conservative rural areas. Several vocational administrators mentioned strong community resistance to the notion of sex neutral programs or "program clusters",[13] which would attract mixed enrollments and then train for a broad variety of occupations.

One vocational director said that he has been trying to put together a cluster of programs around the theme of "Protective Services," including police, firefighting and security guard preparation. But the community resisted the notion of merging male and female occupations. "It's easier to sell the community on traditional male occupations," the director said. "It's difficult to get the community to go along with the cluster concept. They figure it's the man who will have to earn the living." This sentiment was echoed often. "The town wouldn't go for a (sex-neutral) program," one business teacher said. "They only go for stereotyped male occupations."

This teacher, and the vocational director cited previously, come from very different communities -- one relatively urbanized, and in the midst of a diverse labor market; and the other very rural, with

only two large employers. But both have one thing in common; the bulk of women in the region are employed. Twenty years ago this was not true. But community attitudes have not changed with the labor trends, and the belief persists that where resources are scarce, vocational training for women is a luxury.

Sex-neutral programs are also difficult to mount because they tend to be specialized in nature. It is very easy for a program which prepares for a narrow range of jobs to flood a rural region with its graduates. Its own successes can drive a program out of business. Programs in printing and graphics, for example, show promise for mixed enrollments, but their graduates may have to leave the community to find work. For some young people, leaving is a cherished goal; for others, it is an undesirable consequence of obtaining vocational preparation.

One vocational director thought that program rotation might be a reasonable way to deal with this problem. Programs could run for 3 to 5 years, and then be replaced with another specialized training effort. The problems with this model are: equipment costs might provide prohibitive; teachers might have to be replaced; and students who want a particular kind of training would have to hope that they were the right age in the right year. "It's hard on a kid to say, 'Oh, you want to go into health work? Sorry, it's a year too late for that,'" a vocational director said. In many schools, it seems to make more sense to train students in generalized skills which have broad applications within the local labor market.

Someone concerned with enhancing the position of women in the rural labor force might well conclude that the most promising route is to encourage female enrollment in traditionally male programs. This is the strategy used in most of the schools visited for this study. While vocational directors and teachers tended to bristle at the notion of "head-hunting," or "trying to force a girl into auto mechanics just for a statistic," many of them were trying to recruit girls into nontraditional programs and to provide them with the appropriate support system (primarily other girls and co-op placements) to help them make it through.

One guidance counselor mentioned a colleague at an Area Vocational Center who make a routine practice of pointing out girls in nontraditional programs when he guides groups of prospective students through the school. "It backfired recently," she said. "Some sophisticated fifth-grade girls suspected him of being sexist because he kept pointing out the females in the programs."

Along with the pressures of Title IX legislation, and the efforts of the sex equity coordinators, a number of other factors seem to affect nontraditional program enrollments among women. Rural schools which have experienced in-migration from metropolitan areas seem to draw more women into nontraditional programs than those which have remained more homogeneously rural. Programs tended to be more mixed

in those schools surveyed when the schools were near a city, or when they were in a resort region which had drawn metropolitan families in search of the "good life."

One principal in the latter type of district suggested that the cross-enrollments tended to come from the new families. With the long-time residents, "It's mostly French Canadians and northern Yankees around here," he said. "The family is a strong and important value. That's the way it is -- in order to keep a family strong, you need the female in the home." It is the more "socially liberal" families, he added, who encourage their daughters to think about careers. For the long-time residents, "the goal is for the woman to get married and have a family."

Cross-enrollment also seem to vary with the local availability of actual jobs to which the training applies. In the ski country of central Vermont, for example, there is a reasonable market for trained restaurant cooks. Thus, there is a real incentive for young men to enroll in food service programs. In the schools we visited, the existence of local jobs appeared to have a more immediate impact on cross-enrollment of males than on females, but it seems evident that perceptions of what jobs are appropriate for males and females can be altered by changes in the job market.

The Critical Complex: Teacher/ Student/Employer Attitudes

The most important factor affecting nontraditional enrollments appears to have nothing to do either with the make-up of the local population or the availability of jobs. It has to do with the interaction of teachers', students', and employers' attitudes, which can vary from school to school, even within very similar districts. It is important to look at these attitudes as an interacting complex.

While a single instructor can have an impact on cross-enrollment, it is unlikely to bear fruit unless employers are prepared to hire women trained in traditionally male skills. Further, employers are often influenced by teachers in a variety of ways (which will be described below). Finally, the peer group can influence its members either to accept or reject non-traditional training, and the attitude of the peer group is affected by teaches as role models and by the experiences of older siblings and friends already in the labor market. For the purposes of discussion, it is possible, and probably necessary, to break down the complex into its components. But as they exist in the real world, they are engaged in constantly changing interactions with each one another.

Instructor attitudes appear to be pivotal in the development of student response. We found, for example, some vocational agriculture programs which were evenly split between males and females, and others where the males outnumbered the females by a ratio of more than 40:1. The well-mixed programs invariably had instructors who actively encouraged female enrollments; the single-sex programs had teachers

who were tolerant of women at best, and openly biased against them at worst.

One vocational agriculture teacher, whose classes are consistently half female, attributes his success to the "girls in the past who have recommended it to their friends -- my biggest publicity is through the kids." In view of his attitude toward women, this chain of recommendation is not surprising. "I like to see girls in the program," he says. "They add a lot. Girls like the greenhouse a lot, and the work out in the woods -- love sugaring." Not only does he welcome them into the program, he also maintains an abiding faith in their employability as graduates. "I personally believe that girls have equal chances of being employed if they have positive attitudes when applying," he says, and the girls in his program reflect his belief that there is room for them in agriculture-related enterprises.

In the last few years, this teacher has modified his program in an attempt to broaden the jobs prospects of his graduates. "My idea is to expose them to many areas, so they can see what they like. We used to be mostly in dairy production, but then I diversified and the enrollments increased." Some of these diversification efforts specifically enhance the job prospects of the female students: horticulture, landscaping, and work in the U.S. Department of Agriculture dairy and food labs, work which is likely to seem female-appropriate in the communities around the school. But all students are enrolled in the same courses, and he makes no effort to steer female students toward certain interests. His students say that he treats boys and girls as equals, and expects them to participate equally in all aspects of the program -- from the woodlot to the greenhouse.

This instructor is not unique, even in our limited sample of schools. But this attitude seemed less typical of teachers in male-stereotyped programs than that of another VoAg teacher, whose program is the only vocational alternative to business courses in his small, remote school. Like the first instructor, this teacher attributes his enrollment pattern to peer influence. Unlike his counterpart, however, he has only two girls enrolled in the program --with 81 boys. "The imbalance results from peer pressure from their girlfriends," he says. "And the boys give them grief."

A closer look at this teacher's attitude suggests that there are other sources of "grief" for female agriculture students at this school. "We interview freshmen," he says of his recruitment process, "to make sure they're really interested in the program. We're especially interested in interviewing girls. We want to make sure they're not taking it because of their boyfriends. I'm a life-long resident of this community. I know these kids and what they can achieve."

This teacher declares, with obvious sincerity, that his program has "something to offer to both boys and girls," and claims to welcome young women into his program. But his non-sexist claims do not seem in line with his actions. He gave a number of examples of what good

students can do in agriculture programs -- all were male. In constrast, his example of a female student was "a real weirdo -- dyed her hair green for St. Patrick's Day." He says that he treats boys and girls as equals, but adds, "They have to work, too -- not just stand by and watch a boy do their work for them."

The deep-rooted belief in the prospects for female success in male-dominated occupations does not seem to exist here. And, in fact, there seem to be little non-traditional hiring in the community served by the school. As the business teacher in the same school said, "In stores, all the meat cutters are men and all the cashiers are women. There is little chance for (female) advancement. There are women with college educations working in the factories."

It is dffficult to determine the extent to which the local opportunity structure shapes the attitudes of vocational teaches. But is is clear that vocational teachers can have an impact on the local job market -- and that their view of women in nontraditional occupations is important to the kind of impact they have. A printing teacher at a Vermont Area Vocational Center indicated what can be done. "I think I've broken the barriers," he says. Seven years ago, he tried to place a young woman in a co-operative program with a local printer. The printer refused to take a girl. But the teacher had been around a long time, and knew the printer well. He forced the issue. "I gave him a few choice printer's words," he says, "and he took her on." The printer later hired the young woman and now says that he couldn't get along without her. In a small business community word travels fast. The instructor does not expect to have any problems placing female apprentices again.

Obviously, a number of factors went into this small success story. The instructor, as an established member of the local community, could not be dismissed as a wild-eyed newcomer. He is male, which appears to have some positive influence on nontraditional employment. He had worked with local printers for a while before he placed his first female apprentice; he was thus able to overcome initial resistance through the sheer weight of his prior relationships with those employees. But at the root of this success seems to be his belief in the capacity of women to do sound work in any field. "The girls have proven they can handle it," he says. "There's no great difficulty in mechanical ability. Boys sham more -- girls make awful mistakes, because they're less afraid to make them. But then you can teach from them." He proudly displays a beautiful cookbook his class designed and printed. "I would never have gotten that from boys -- I don't care what anyone says!"

Belief in women's capacities can help an instructor break through employment barriers. But the converse is, evidently, equally true. In one southern New Hampshire community, where junior high school girls are still required to take home economics while the boys take compulsory shop, the few girls who enroll in industrial arts classes at the high school level are not taken seriously. "We had a separate course for girls a few years ago," the teacher says. "It was geared

differently. They had easier projects -- made pin holders and things."

He has a few girls in his classes now, but does not see their skills as useful in a vocational context. "Cindy is in home maintenance," he says. "She can learn how to fix irons and sewing machines. She seems to enjoy it, even though she doesn't get too much out of it." The school's principal makes the same kind of distinctions about the girls in the small engines class: "The girls do well on the tests," he says, "but they are not comparable to boys when it comes to actual mechanics and application." A few "choice printer's words" might well be applied to attitudes such as these. But they are not uncommon in rural schools and serve to reinforce the traditional sex-stereotyping that exists in rural communities.

Although there was a great deal of evidence that teachers can shape peer group attitudes toward formerly stereotyped vocational training, most of the professionals in the survey felt that peer influences operate independently of anything a teacher can do. These pressures, they said, are generally negative, in that they reinforce the traditional and stereotyped views of the community, and discourage girls from enrolling in atypical programs. Most teaches had stories about how boys treat girls in male-dominated programs, which they told with disapproval.

The girls, however, seem generally to have worked out a means of dealing with harrassment -- a combination of outrage and humor which seems to get them through the year. One girl, in a shop class in an extremely traditional school, said of her male classmates, "We get along good." But then she added: "I had all the wires on my project and they pulled them out. I was so mad. Electrical work is hard -- and they did it just to be funny." In another school, the metal trades teacher says of his female student, "She gets some flak from the boys -- but she just ignores it or gives it back."

Whether the position as permanent target has a serious psychological effect on a girl is not known. The girls who do get up the nerve to enroll at all, seem to handle peer harrassment well.

A number of teachers reported modification in the attitudes of boys in classes where there have been female students, even if only a few. A metal trades teacher said, "Boys react quite well to girls -- they were a little paternalistic at first, but that attitude wore off when the found the girls were better molders by far." The girls in that program report that harrassment has diminished, and they seem willing to interpret reduced teasing as acceptance.

Just as there are limits on an instructor's capacity to mold peer attitudes, there are limits to the vocational program's capacity to alter attitudes in the job market. While rural teachers, at least those who have been around for awhile, can have great impact on their communities, this impact is often limited by the resistance of the rural community to nontraditional employment. One business teacher told a story which she said was typical of her area: "one

bank called the other day and said they were looking to hire a boy that could eventually move up into a managerial position. 'I said, 'We have three girls who have straight A's.' They insisted on a boy -they didn't want a teller, they said. I had to give them a boy with a C average." Other teachers told similar stories of employer intransigence, often backed by the attitudes of families and friends.

When the local employment market is closed to women with nontraditional skills, pressure for leaving the community is strong. One vocational counselor summed up a common attitude: "My guess is, Joe at the local shop would take a boy over a girl, no matter what. But big companies are crying for women. They've got to get their federal money and meet their quotas -- they'll scoop 'em up." This situation is fine for the girls who want to leave their home communities, but it is a clear obstacle to those who primary desire is to stay where they are.

In some schools, teachers reported student reluctance (especially among girls) to travel as far as the nearest medium-size town to work; the transition from the rural school to a slightly more cosmopolitan workplace seemed to cause a crisis of confidence in many of her female students, one teacher told us. "They don't refuse those jobs because of lack of skills -- the banks would rather have our students -- but because of the life-style." In the context of this kind of reluctance to leave the familiar, it is clear that if nontraditional training requires leaving the area to use one's skills, many young women are unlikely to want it, even if they have appropriate talents.

This study of the current status of rural women's vocational education has not produced a particularly optimistic picture. Young women with complex (and often incompatible) desires for their future grow up in conservative communities served by schools with limited vocational training options. If they choose male-stereotyped training, they are likely to have to leave their home areas or struggle to find a place among reluctant employers. If they have access to a sex-neutral program, choosing it is likely to prepare them for a very limited number of local jobs.

In addressing the needs of rural women, vocational programs find themselves whipsawed -- torn between the pressures of the state and federal governments and the express desires of the community. Often, the specific needs of female students become merely the rope in this value-laden tug-of-war. It is no wonder that rural high school girls are often confused about their vocational future. It is no wonder that vocational directors tend to sigh heavily when asked to talk about their programs and plans for women's education.

* * *

Jackie has lived all her seventeen years in a small Vermont town and plans to stay there. "I went to New York City once," she says. "Down there I'd live in constant fear of getting

mugged or raped -- you have to keep your door locked all the time. No, I definitely want to stay around here."

She has definite plans for work as well. She has already done some waitressing, and is sure she wouldn't want that for the rest of her life, "you get sick being around food all the time." Nor would she want "a constant typing job," though her business occupations teacher praises her skill in typing. What she really likes best is "working with people, like working in a bank out front." She is studying bookkeeping and shorthand and computer programming because they should help her get the kind of job she wants; they'll "look good." Her teacher considers her one of his best all-around business students and feels she has excellent chances of being hird by one of the banks in the areas. He takes care that his students understand the fine points of getting a job, like employers' preferences for skirts and stockings rather than jeans. Jackie knows how to be poised and confident in an interview, and has already had several promising ones for summer work.

Jackie also knows that her best employment opportunities will be outside her own town, in one of the more sophisticated communities 10 to 15 miles south. While her guidance counselor feels that employers in those towns like to have rurally raised workers because of their "high moral values," Jackie has encountered some "snotty" attitudes, which she attributes to the fact that she lives in the country. Unlike some of her classmates who worry about how they'll "stack up" against more cosmopolitan candidates for jobs, Jackie is not intimidated. "I don't feel anybody should be walked all over. After all, I'm doing them an equal favor." She expects the bank she'd most like to work for, the area's largest, "will probably treat me on an equal level."

Her determination to stay in her home town while working at a good job down the road has raised the problem of transportation. Jackie has this all figured out, too, at least for the summer. At her father's suggestion, she bought a Moped. It was a matter of having to "decide priorities." This purchase meant that she didn't have the money to go on the Honors English class trip to England. But she enjoys her bike. "At first, people were talking like anything," she says with glee. "They were really shocked!"

This kind of notoriety is "funny" to Jackie, who sees no reason why a girl shouldn't ride a Moped. But on more serious issues she declares herself more traditional. She feels, for example, that the wife should take major responsibility for housework and childrearing in a marriage. One of her teachers has a husband who stays home to care for their small child; Jackie says she admires this, but adds quickly that she wouldn't want her own husband to do such a thing: "It would make me feel awkward. It's as if he's not quite as manly, you know?" Still, she would like help with the dishes, and perhaps other tasks so that "you could both go out and have fun -- so it's not just him

going off fishing and hunting." Jackie feels the concept of compromise is important in a marriage. She and her boyfriend Peter have worked out "pretty much the same ideas," she says, "though we used to fight a lot."

One of the things Jackie and Peter agree on is marrying and having their children young. Jackie notes that this is a common pattern in her town, where "everybody knows everybody else." Although the teachers and advisors at her school counsel waiting, she feels have children at an early age can be a good thing. My parents are pretty young, and we're really close. We have a great time. You can have more fun with your kids if you're nearer their age." Accordingly, she hopes to have hers early and "pretty close together," but not too many: "maybe too ... it's pretty hard to pay for kids. It's not fair to have more than you can afford."

Another thing Jackie and Peter share is this recognition that raising children is expensive. "Peter wants me to work," Jackie says. "We couldn't afford just one person's salary ... Usually you have to have both working." Peter plans to set up his own lumber operation, because "he loves to work outside and be independent." Jackie plans to return to work after having her children. She realizes that she will then need someone else to care for them, and is hopeful of finding someone like Peter's sister, who "takes in seven or eight kids along with her own. I certainly wouldn't leave them with anybody I didn't trust."

Jackie's confidence in her ability to create the future she wants extends even to the details of her home. She and Peter have their eyes on some land to buy, and plan to build their own house. "Right now we'd just put up the shell, work a bit at a time." But in 10 years, Jackie sees herself "in a nice house -- that's the biggest goal -- [illegible] a couple of kids and a good job." When a friend points out that she hasn't mentioned a husband in this vision, she says, "Oh! I just figure the husband comes with the house .... Geez," she says and laughs, "I don't sound very liberated, do I?"

* * *

Looking to the Future: Prospects and Programs

While the present status of rural women in the labor market is distressingly low, the situation is not hopeless. There is much that vocational education programs and personnel can do to prepare young rural women for interesting and varied labor market participation. Among the schools in this small study, we found a number of promising ideas being tested and implemented. With enhanced communication among rural schools, some coordination and adaptation of programs might fruitfully occur.

Several steps could be taken to make vocational programs more relevant to the specific needs of rural high school students:

1. Design and adopt courses which will help rural high school students to develop realistic and thoughtful career orientations for themselves. This is particularly important for rural girls, who generally do not get adequate counseling through the customary structures. The POI study found that, compared to males, female high school students get little help in career planning -- from guidance counselors, teachers, or parents -- thus reducing the likelihood that they will be able to achieve ambitions requiring complex or long-term training. The non-college bound girl, who is most likely to be enrolled in a secondary school vocational program, was the least likely of anyone in her peer group to get advice at all.[14]

Teachers and counselors agreed that some kind of career planning program was important for these young women. Vocational education counselors said that most non-college bound girls make no particular career plans, in constrast to young men. "Most of the girls plan on being married three or four years after high school -- unless they are pregnant," one principal said, reflecting a general assessment of female ambitions. "A lot of girls want to achieve," a guidance counselor at another school noted, "but they have this fall-back -- 'I can always marry some rich, good-looking guy.'" Since this "fall-back" in most rural areas is about as useful as depending on winning the state lottery, it does a real disservice to girls who use it as a basis for life planning.

The girls, themselves, generally projected vague career ideas, supplemented by fairly detailed plans for husband-home-family. Many were able to tell us more about the number of children they plan to have in 1990 than about the kind of jobs they will look for next year. Further, some of those with concrete career plans had little notion of what those plans entailed. One girl said that she wants to "get a little [illegible]t shop," because she likes animals and has raised several of her own. But she does not know anything about running a small business, and it has not occurred to her that such information might be useful to obtain. "I'll get an accountant," she says breezily, and giggles.

Obviously, girls like this need help in planning their lives. They need to learn to deal with the contradictions implicit in the juxtaposition of traditional values and contemporary pressures. Young women need to recognize that they cannot be simultaneously Olivia Walton and Mary Tyler Moore. Choices must be made. Further, they need to plan a future, rather than to assume that it will reveal itself to them. Girls who want a career need to know where to find training, what obstacles might stand between them and satisfactory employment, and how to overcome those obstacles. For many, the place to have this reality orientation is high school, where many problems and conflicts can be worked through in a supportive and sheltered environment.

Teachers and guidance counselors suggested a variety of ways in which this kind of training could be accomplished. Several schools offer formal courses which encourage career planning, or which compel students to look at the realistic implications of certain decisions they might make. There is at least one commercially available curriculum (developed by a team led by this author) which is used -- in various adaptations -- by some of the schools in this study. This course, called "Options: A Career Development Curriculum for Rural High School Students",[15] uses case studies and simulations to teach high school girls and boys ways of handling career and family choices.

Other teachers felt that courses at the high school level come too late to do a great deal of good. One counselor in an Area Vocational Center said that non-stereotyped career orientation must come early if girls are expected to make sound plans in high school. As one principal commented, "The sex divisions are in the culture these girls come from," and there are limitations to the impact school curriculum can have.

Nevertheless, most teachers seemed to feel that courses have a useful, if limited, role, in the orientation of girls to the outside world. Several teachers agreed with the woman who said that classwork was most likely to have an impact if it was bolstered by role models: favorite teachers with nontraditional family styles. "Men on this faculty are not afraid to do traditional women's work," one teacher said. "There are fathers taking care of kids -- this kind of example is very important." In rural communities, where the lifestyles of faculty members is likely to be well known to students (and to their parents), this kind of modeling can be a useful teaching tool.

2. Encourage young women to consider nontraditional careers. Principals and vocational directors at every school in this study declared with vigor that their programs are open to both males and females. But there is a gap, sometimes a gulf, between openness and encouragement. In one school, the shop teacher says, "I say they're welcome, but maybe they're afraid of me. I'm pretty strict. One girl was going to take my course this year, but she didn't. She would have been the only girl." In another school, the metal work teacher made sure that the sole female freshman in his course was placed with the sole senior girl, encouraging them to help and support one another. In both cases, the official posture is welcoming; in practice, the differences are obvious.

The data gathered for this study suggest that effective female recruitment in rural schools is entirely possible. Taking vocational agriculture as an example, we have seen that marked differences in female enrollment appear to stem from differences in instructors' attitudes and in their willingness to organize courses which include "female" subjects of interest (such as horticulture). In fact, vocational agriculture might well serve as a model for nontraditional recruiting. It has been a male bastion for nearly 100 years, but it is also amenable to broad interpretation in terms of the skills it

teaches. VoAg instructors could spearhead efforts to recruit young women, and at the same time serve as models for broadening the focus of other traditionally male training programs.

3. Re-educate rural vocational teachers and employers about the potential of women in nontraditional occupations. Vocational education teachers and counselors need to learn that career choices are not made entirely on the basis of peer and family influence. They need to be confronted with the evidence of successful nontraditional enrollment efforts. They must recognize the possibility that attitudes they attribute exclusively to the rural culture may be their own as well.

It will not be enough simply to inform vocational education teachers that they can attract women to nontraditional programs. They need help in planning strategies for recruitment, support, and training of women who are ready for those careers formerly considered characteristically male.

There is already significant pressure on vocational education programs to raise their female enrollments. "They (state and federal officials) get carried away and put stickers on our books (indicating sex-stereotyped material)," one teacher said. "It's not our fault." Many teachers and administrators reported a sense of frustration at the lack of positive suggestions to help them to achieve the desired mix. Workshops and other in-service training activities might reduce the frustration and enhance the effectivness of recruitment programs.

It seems likely that the best instructors for such workshops would be rural vocational education teachers who have dealt effectively with problems of female recruitment and support. They have had firsthand experience in dealing with issues that keep girls out of nontraditional occupations, and with the values of rural communities that reinforce those issues. Further, they are likely to have high credibility with other rural vocational education teachers who might reasonably distrust urban-based vocational education instructors, or people who have never wrestled with the complex problems of vocational education. Finally, the use of rural vocational education teachers will give credit and visibility to these pioneers in nontraditional female training -- credit many of them could use to keep them going in what is often an uphill struggle.

The re-education of teachers is only the first step, however. It must be coupled with the re-education of employers. There would be little use (and perhaps some negative impact) in welcoming young women to nontraditional programs if they are going to be unemployable when trained. Since many vocational education teachers have strong ties with employers, it is probably best to leave the community education function to local staff. One vocational education teacher, a man with a good record of nontraditional job placement, says that "one-to-one co-op placements have the most local effect," probably

because he makes sure that every successful experience is widely reported in the community. Once again, it is unreasonable to expect that every vocational education teacher will automatically know how to re-educate the local employers; materials and direct instruction must be available to help with these efforts.

4. Develop more sex-neutral programs. Sex-neutral programs, in spite of the problems associated with them in rural areas (i.e. labor market saturation and community resistance), are worth serious attention. First, there is some evidence that more occupations are now regarded as sex-neutral among rural young people, thus expanding the boundaries of this category. One school in our sample reported that the local Area Vocational Center's printing and graphics program "had become more sex-neutral" during the last few years, in spite of its traditional male bias. No one could say why, but general changes in society and the employment market seem to have encouraged young women to enroll in the program. Several schools reported similar changes in foods courses, as restaurant work becomes a more acceptable occupational option for young men.

An analysis of enrollment patterns in Vermont and New Hampshire vocational education programs (postsecondary as well as secondary) seems to confirm local acceptance of a broadened view. While most courses were still sexually discriminatory, a substantial number fell into a mixed-enrollment category. These included courses in accounting and management, data processing and computer programming, printing and graphics, health technician programs (other than nursing, although there seems to be some movement of young men into that traditionally female-dominated field), landscaping and horticulture, bartending, real estate, natural resource management, and quantity foods preparation. If sharply polarized perceptions of occupations are beginning to disintegrate, it would be wise for secondary school programs to encourage that trend. The very existence of sex-neutral programs breaks down the conception of "natural divisions" between men's and women's work, and weakens the barriers maintained by that perceived division.

Further, sex-neutral programs offer young women the opportunity to upgrade their occupational status without violating the traditional norms of their communities, or the expectations of their peers. A young woman who would never consider trying to be a welder might well prosper as a restaurant chef, or as a greenhouse manager. And the existence in a community of mixed-sex employment within one occupational category paves the way for mixed-sex employment in even less conventionally acceptable categories.

Some schools attempt to resolve the problems inherent in sex-neutral programs by designing "cluster programs" in large categories like "protective services," or "human services." They reason that, even though these programs are made up of actual jobs which traditionally have been sex oriented (fireman/meter maid; nurses; aid/ambulance driver), the presence of both boys and girls within a general course of study will automatically begin to break down those distinc-

tions. It is difficult to predict if this approach will be successful. In our sample, the schools were in the initial stages of developing such programs, and had as yet no evidence of success or failure.

5. Develop programs to train women entrepreneurs. There is some good strong evidence indicating that small business may be a most promising field for rural women.[16] Many rural areas are presently experiencing a wave of in-migration from metropolitan areas,[17] providing an excellent market for new business. Even in places where the population is not rising, a history of underservice in rural communities often makes small business development plausible. And women can profit from these opportunities.

Small business and service enterprises are well suited to rural women's needs and interests for a variety of reasons. They do not require an enlightened employer; they do not require large capital outlay; they can benefit from some traditional rural female strengths: independence, self-sufficiency, willingness to put in long hours of work. They also permit women who want to develop traditional "women's skills" to make a reasonable living.

For example, many young rural women would like to be beauticians. They invest a great deal of time and money in the training programs required for licensing, and are then faced with the problem of finding a job in a beauty parlor (often far from home). When they do find a job, most of their receipts go to an employer. If a young woman knows how to set up a small business, she might be able to open a small shop catering to local needs, thus permitting her to earn an income, achieve autonomy, and be useful to her community. But beauticians' training does not prepare anyone to run a business. Specific programs need to be designed to provide that kind of training.

While some teachers interviewed for this study felt that there was little room for small-scale private enterprise in their communities, others felt that this attitude indicated lack of imagination, not opportunity. One assistant principal said, "I once made a list of 22 things youngsters could do to supplement income in their own towns. The gas crunch is going to drive people back to the towns, to more self-sufficiency. If I had federal money, I'd set up a coordinator in each town to set up small businesses. There are a million things they could do right in town -- paint and repair houses, glaze windows, repair small machines...."

One school has launched a small business program under the general rubric of Vocational Agriculture; others are considering similar steps. Many teachers are not prepared to teach such programs, however. One home economics teacher said that there was a real need for day-care centers in her community, but she had no idea how to teach the business skills required to start one. She felt perfectly prepared to teach a child-care course, but could not teach subjects about which she knew little.

If small businesses are to provide genuine opportunities for women, money and expertise are necessary to provide the training required. These are not unobtainable assets, available only to graduates of the Harvard Business School. But they do need to be packaged and made available to rural schools and to the rural women -- young and mature -- who need them.

6. Design programs which will teach women to use their skills for supplementary income. Many rural women want to maintain their primary identity as homemakers and mothers. The bulk of girls surveyed for the POI study said they felt that mothers of young children should not work outside the home; and many said that they would prefer not to work until their children are full-grown. But many of these same women will want (or need) to earn some money. Programs should be provided to teach young women how to turn skills they already possess into income-producing work.

Many young women, even in these modern times, have learned from their mothers and peers a number of old-fashioned skills: sewing, canning, quilting, knitting, and other forms of handwork. These can often be used to provide supplementary income. Women who know how to quilt, knit, or make leather goods can earn some money working at home, in their spare time, with virtually no overhead costs. Women who know how to garden and can are capable of running produce stands, or of supplying local markets with home-made or home-grown foods.

Other women would like to learn new skills which would enable them to earn money at home. Students at one school expressed a desire for programs in furniture refinishing and chair caning. A teacher in another school recommended a course in sign-painting for women with artistic inclinations. Numerous other skills could be identified, each appropriate for part-time, home-based employment.

But these women, like their full-time entrepreneurial sisters, need training in the elements of marketing, accounting, and other small business skills. Craftswomen need to know how to assess the lucrative urban markets, so that their quilts, afghans, or leather belts will appeal to the people who can afford to buy hand-made goods at high prices. They need to learn how to form marketing cooperatives, and how to get their finished goods to the best retailing outlets. and they need to learn how to prepare income tax returns which maximize the advantages of being in business for themselves. All of these skills can be taught, and schools would seem to be the most reasonable vehicles for teaching them.

These recommendations are just a beginning. But they have an important common element. They assume the existence of a full range of rural women -- from those who want to break into predominantly male occupations and need help to do so to those who want to maintain a very traditional rural womens' role, but who need to earn a little money. Further, they assume that rural high school girls should be taught how to make choices, and how to plan careers, but that they should not be taught which choices they should make. It is crucial

that those of us interested in life preparation for rural women not make the mistake of assuming that "good women" will choose to forsake their traditional values. Much good has stemmed from those values as well as much constraint. It is important that efforts to make options available to rural women not result in the destruction of the rural communities that women have long maintained.

* * *

"Your size really holds you back on these machines," says Gina, indicating the collective of massive equipment in the metal trades shop at her Area Vocational Center. "I'm only five-one; my friend who graduated last year was short, too. She got turned down for an apprenticeship and one reason the company told her was she was too short. Like I have to stand on a box to reach the brake on that one over there. So we were thinking -- why not have little crates so you could reach everything? There'd be a way around it ... if they allowed you to find a way around it."

Gina will finish the 2-year program in mechanical drafting this year. She started out with an interest in architectural drafting, but finds the mechanical aspect "more interesting -- I like to tear things apart." She also enjoyed working with machines in order to make the things that she's designed, which is what brings her to the metals shop. She is the only girl in her program at the Center, though there is a younger girl starting metal trades this year. With the help of her teacher, Gina acts as a counselor and model for her; the school staff made sure Gina was working on a machine when the new girl came to the shop for her first day.

This kind of support is valuable in a program where, according to the Center's coordinator, "boys are a little paternalistic at first" and according to the new girl in metal trades, "They don't like a girl in the shop; they think you can't do the job they can do." Gina sometimes feels isolated, but her work absorbs her and keeps her going. She gets support for that work from her drafting teacher, who has had up to 50 percent girls in past classes. Although he notes that girls "do lack in practical experience," he feels they tend to be "more careful, more precise, more exact" in drafting; they value "nice clean work" more than boys.

Gina looks forward to going on to college because it will help her get ahead in her trade. She expects to get "a B.A. at least" and then hopes a company will sponsor her for a Master' degree in engineering. She is bewildered by classmates at her local high school who plan to attend liberal arts colleges: "They're deciding to go and they don't even know what for.

Seems like they're just wasting money." She attributes her own practical view of higher education to her mother, a second grade teacher who has always told her, "You go to school to learn, not to play." And while she says that some of her regular teachers "think Voc Ed is for dummies," she refuses to accept that stigma. "I'm in college courses, physics and things like that -- but I'd rather come here and learn a trade."

This ambition springs partly from Gina's observation of her siblings' experiences. She has two older brothers who didn't go to college, but now "wish they had." Her older sister, however, provides the most important example. Although this sister had planned to become a teacher, she gave that up and got married right out of high school. "Now," says Gina, "she's sick of staying home. She's looking for a part-time job, but there isn't much.... I don't want that to happen to me." Gina thinks she'd like to marry someday, and then perhaps adopt kids, but work comes first. "I'm going to get something to fall back on -- and then get married. I don't want to get stuck with no skills."

* * *

Appendix

Interview Site Selection

Schools were chosen to represent the kind of variation typical in rural New England. Four were small high schools serving single communities; four were regional, serving students from several surrounding towns; two were Area Vocational Centers; the rest offered a varying number of courses and programs. Four were located in rural communities within easy commuting distance from large employment centers; four were located in remote rural settings, where most employment was found locally or which required substantial commuting to work. Four of the schools were in Vermont, and four in New Hampshire (highly similar states geographically, but with very different school funding patterns). There were other possible dimensions of variation; those chosen, however, seemed most relevant to the vocational training patterns of youthful residents.

Interview Procedures

One of two interviewers, both with extensive rural school experience, visited each school for a day. Both talked with administrators, vocational education teachers (at least one from a traditional female program and one from a traditional male program); guidance counselors (where available); and students enrolled in both male- and female-oriented courses. Where there were programs intended to be sex-neutral, teachers and students in those programs were interviewed also.

Interviews were open-ended, but followed a general outline established by the principal investigator in conjunction with the interviewers. The basic interview outline is included below.

I. Basic Information

A. Statistics

Number of students in school, in vocational education
Number of staff in school, vocational staff
Number of students who go into job market
Number of students who go into junior colleges, technical schools
Number of students who go into four-year colleges

B. Brief Description of Community

Who lives there?
What do they do?

II. A. What is the Labor Market for Males?

B. What do Women do in the Labor Market?

What do adult women, presently in the labor market, do?
What are the opportunities for female graduates -- any new opportunities?

C. How do you Prepare Families for Employment?

1. Nature of vocational education programs
2. Distribution of females in programs

D. Aspirations of Females

What do they get?
What do they want?

III. Analysis of Situation ("Problem")

Lack of opportunities?
Lack of family and community support systems?
Values and attitudes?
Others?

IV. Role of Vocational Education

A. 1. Impact of Title IX
2. Efforts to enroll females in nontraditional programs

B. Difficulties

"Atmosphere"?
Conflict with opportunity structure?
Availability -- only stereotypical programs?

V. What Could Be Done?

A. What about:

1. Neutral occupations (not presently sex-stereotyped by students), i.e., food services, accounting, distributive education?

2. High levels of stereotyped occupations?

3. Entrepreneurship?

4. Home/cottage industry. If doing training for these, how? For girls?

B. Other suggestions?

Notes

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2. Dunne, Faith. "Traditional Values/Contemporary Pressures: The Conflicting Needs of America's Rural Women." Paper presented at the Rural Education Seminar, College Park, Maryland, May 1979.

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8. Cosby, Arthur G. and Virginia P. McDermott. "Rural Youth in Context." In Arthur G. Cosby and Ivan Charner (Eds.) Education and Work in Rural America: The Social Context of Early Career Decision and Achievement. (College Station, Texas: Texas A & M University, 1978)

9. See Chapter by Ptarmigan Teal

10. Flora and Johnson, "Discarding the Distaff: New Roles for Rural Women." In Thomas Ford (Ed.), Rural U.S.A., Persistance and Change.

11. Rosenfeld, Stuart A. "Different Voc's for Rural Folks: Vocational Education in the Country." National Institute of Education, Washington, D.C., May 1979.

12. Rieder, Corinne. "Work, Women, and Vocational Education." American Education, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education, June 1977).

13. "Program clusters" result from merging similar occupationally-specific

programs into one broader program which prepares the participants for multiple but related occupations.

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15. Dunne, Faith, Rogers Elliott, and Andrew Block. "Beyond the Cities: Expanding the Sense of Option Among Rural Adolescents." Curriculum Inquiry, 10 (1) 1980.

16. See Chapter by Ptarmigan Teal.

17. Beale, Calvin L. The Revival of Population Growth in Non-Metropolitan America. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service,1976).

V. Options for Equity: Federal Policies Affecting Vocational Education Opportunities for Rural Women and Girls

by Margaret C. Dunkle

Federal education policies can profoundly affect the training -- and employment -- opportunities available to rural women and girls. Yet, these policies have generally been enacted by the Congress and implemented by the Executive Branch with little discussion of the unique needs of rural people or women generally, much less the often doubly unique needs of rural women.

Rural women who want to obtain, or who must obtain, training which prepares them to compete effectively in the job market often face double discrimination -- once because they are women and once because they are rural. They encounter, often to an even greater extent than their urban sisters, sex discrimination and bias in their schools. As rural American women they are often even more isolated than their rural brothers from resources, support services and diverse job opportunities.

Assuming that sex equity remains a national priority and that geographic differences are recognized when programs are designed, there are many ways in which these federal goals can be achieved. Vigorous enforcement of the law prohibiting sex discrimination in education -- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 -- is perhaps the most obvious route.

While necessary, enforcement of Title IX alone is not sufficient to end sex bias and discrimination against women and girls in vocational education programs. A necessary complement to civil rights enforcement is a strategy to end bias and stereotyping in specific programs and activities at the state, district, and local levels. The most straightforward -- and the most restrictive -- way to approach this is to require or mandate specific activities or expenditures. One former Sex Equity Coordinator from a rural state made the case for this mandatory approach:

> The only thing that will work for rural women is a mandate. Strong legislation is the only thing that gets attention out here.

A more permissive strategy would be to provide encouragement or financial incentives for activities that increase women's opportunities. If the incentives are sufficiently large, this method can be effective.

The most flexible strategy at the state and local levels is to mandate outcomes or progress toward desirable goals (such as increased education and employment opportunities for rural women), but to leave the specific method to state and local education agencies. This approach may be the most consistent with the ideology of the current administration since it has the fewest programmatic "strings" attached. At the same time, this approach leaves much to the discretion of local interests, interests which may not be enthusiastic about expanding opportunities for women and girls. If this approach is used, it is critical that the mandated outcomes be clear and measurable, and that progress be monitored and documented.

The following pages outline several major pieces of legislation which could be used as vehicles for increasing vocational eduction opportunities for rural women and girls. Then, specific goals or objectives which would increase opportunities for these women are identified, and legislative and policy options for reaching these goals effectively are suggested.

Legislative Vehicles

Four statutes are of special significance in reviewing federal policy regarding vocational education opportunities for rural women and girls: the Vocational Education Act (which was substantially amended in 1976 to address sex equity issues), the Women's Educational Equity Act, the student assistance authorities in the Higher Education Act (which provide financial aid to students in postsecondary education), and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (which prohibits sex discrimination by schools and colleges receiving federal funds).[1]

A brief review of relevant provisions of each of these statutes will assist in identifying effective strategies for addressing the needs of rural women and girls.

1976 Amendments to the Vocational Education Act

The 1976 Amendments to the Vocational Education Act have been hailed as a major breakthrough for women and girls.[2] These amendments to the law added a large number of provisions aimed at eliminating sex bias and sex discrimination in vocational education programs. For example, these 1976 provisions:

- state that "overcom[ing] sex discrimination and sex stereoty-

ping in vocational education programs:" is a purpose of the Vocational Education Act;

- require that each state "assign full-time personnel," a Sex Equity Coordinator, to "assist" the state by undertaking a variety of activities to eliminate sex bias and discrimination. The statute enumerates specific duties for the coordinator, including data collection and analysis, developing corrective actions, and reviewing state grants to assure that the "interests and needs of women are addressed;"

- require each state to allot at least $50,000 of federal funds each year for sex equity activities and for the hiring of a Sex Equity Coordinator;

- require that the state vocational education plans "set forth policies and procedures which the state will follow so as to assure equal access to vocational education programs by both women and men." These plans must include a number of specific provisions regarding sex equity, including "actions to be taken to overcome sex discrimination and sex stereotyping in all state and local vocational education programs;" incentives to "encourage the enrollment of both women and men in nontraditional courses of study," and incentives to "develop model programs to reduce sex stereotyping in all occupations;"

- specifically permit, but do not require, states to use federal vocational education funds for support services (such as counseling, job development assistance, and job followup services) for women who enter nontraditional fields, day-care services for children of students in secondary or postsecondary programs, and vocational education for "displaced homemakers;"

- require that federally funded state contracts for exemplary and innovative projects "give priority to programs and projects designed to reduce sex stereotyping in vocational education;"

- permit, but do not require, states to undertake a variety of other activities aimed at eliminating sex discrimination and bias -- such as, development of nonbiased curriculum, guidance and testing materials; training guidance counselors regarding sex stereotyping; and providing inservice training aimed at overcoming sex bias in vocational education programs to vocational education teachers and other personnel;

- require that the U.S. Department of Education collect data on student enrollment by race and sex through the Vocational Education Data System (VEDS); and

- require that women knowledgeable about sex discrimination and sex stereotyping be appointed to state vocational education

advisory councils, as well as to the National Advisory Council on Vocational Education.

The sex equity provisions added to the Vocational Education Act in 1976, were a conscious attempt by the Congress to end discrimination and bias in vocational education programs. As the Committee on Education and Labor stated in its report on the bill:

> The Committee (has come) to the conclusion that the inferior position which women now hold in the labor market is being reinforced by many of the current practices in vocational education. We have also concluded that Federal legislation must address this problem if it is to be solved.[3]

The Committee cited the sharp differences in male and female enrollments, noting that females were concentrated in a narrow range of courses that led to female-intensive and low paying jobs. The Committee placed responsibility for leadership at the door of vocational educators:

> Most witnesses ... agreed that these enrollment patterns existed because vocational schools have done nothing to prevent programs from reflecting the general status of women in society. Beliefs of parents, societal attitudes about the inferior capabilities of women, and cultural role expectations act as constraints, encouraging schools to retain the status quo.[4]

The Ford administration, agreeing that sex bias and discrimination in vocational education was a serious problem, supported many of the bill's specific provisions aimed at providing sex equity.[5]

Despite these relatively clear provisions and the widespread support they enjoyed when enacted in 1976, progress to eliminate sex bias and discrimination in vocational education programs has been slow. Almost half of the states did not spend the full $50,000 on sex equity in fiscal 1979 and some were quite late in even appointing a Sex Equity Coordinator, despite the requirements in the law. Monitoring and enforcement of these requirements by the Department of Education has been mixed at best.[6]

Similarly, researchers who conducted a comprehensive study of the Vocational Educational Act for the National Institute of Education concluded that:

> the sex equity mechanisms and processes Congress built into the Act have generally not operated to "encourage the States to take vigorous action to overcome sex discrimination and sex stereotyping in vocational education.[7]

The authors of the study found that the primary reason for this was that "much is authorized, but little is required with respect to the

expenditures of [Vocational Education Act] funds to achieve sex equity in vocational education."[8]

> The legal provisions concerning sex equity in the [Vocational Education Act] must be strengthened considerably if Congressional intent with respect to "carry[ing] out all programs of vocational education in such a manner as to be free from sex discrimination and sex stereotyping" is to be realized.[9]

Given these findings, the authors made specific recommendations,[10] including the following.

- Continue the requirement for mandatory expenditures for full-time sex equity personnel.
- Clarify the provisions regarding programs for displaced homemakers.
- Clarify how states are to give "priority" to state contracts for exemplary and innovative projects.
- Reorganize and consolidate the functions of the Sex Equity Coordinator and develop standards concerning adequate performance of each of these functions.
- Use the most effective incentives to eradicate sex bias: specifically, a set aside of funds, giving priority to local applications which address sex equity concerns, and granting a waiver from a requirement (such as the matching requirement) to states which propose to reduce sex bias and stereotyping.
- Clarify what "results" of compliance with the state's plan equal access policies and procedures a state must demonstrate: define "results" in terms of outcome or impact, rather than activites.
- Require local applicants to provide the state with information concerning the sex equity situation and activities.

Despite these strong recommendations for improvement, it would not be accurate to say that the 1976 amendments have had no effect on vocational education programs. In a 1979 survey the Vocational Education Equity Council found that states identified the following as "major successes" in sex equity: training and awareness workshops, adopting statewide policies to reflect a commitment to sex equity, special projects (such as developing training programs or mini-grants to schools and colleges), and developing audio-visual and written materials.[11]

The Women's Educational Equity Act

The Women's Educational Equity Act was enacted in 1974, "to provide educational equity for women in the United States." The bill authorized demonstration, developmental, and dissemination activities of national, statewide or general significance. The Act was expanded in 1978, to include a "second tier" to provide assistance to schools and organizations for special sex equity programs of local significance. This second tier has not yet been funded.

The first tier of the program (demonstration, development, and dissemination) currently has four priority areas: model projects for Title IX compliance, educational equity for racial and ethnic minority women and girls, educational equity for disabled women and girls, and influencing leaders in educational policy and administration.

Student Financial Assistance

Direct student aid has grown rapidly in the past ten years.[12] Students in accredited postsecondary vocational and technical schools, proprietary (profit-making) schools, and community colleges are generally eligible for federal student aid on the same basis as students enrolled in four year colleges and universities.

There are six major student financial assistance programs, all in the Higher Education Act:

- Pell Grants (formerly Basic Educational Opportunity Grants, BEOGs);
- Guaranteed Student Loans;
- State Student Incentive Grants; and
- Three "Campus Based" Programs -- Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, National Direct Student Loans, and the College Work-Study Program.

All of these programs, except the Guaranteed Student Loan Program, provide assistance to students based on their "financial need." The determination of "need" for aid depends on two separate components: the calculation of the resources available to the student (such as income and assets) and determination of the cost of education (determined by a student expense budget). These calculations are highly regulated by the Department of Education.

The first calculation -- resources available to the student -- includes several provisions that are especially important for rural women:

- home equity is excluded from the calculation of assets -- a factor which may be of special importance to divorced or widowed women; and

- farm and business assets are treated more liberally in the "need" calculation than are other assets (such as savings and investments) -- a factor which increases the eligiblity for aid of students from family-owned farms.

The second calculation -- determining the cost of education -- can also be especially important to rural women. Allowable costs can include:

- child care;
- transportation;
- educational costs of a child; and
- unusual medical expenses.

In addition to these provisions, the Congress amended the student financial assistance provisions of the Higher Education Act in 1980 in several other areas relevant to rural women:

- institutions can now use up to 10 percent of their federal funds from three programs (the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant, the College Work-Study and the State Student Incentive Grant programs) for "less-than-half-time" students -- that is, for students taking fewer than six credit hours of course work;
- the number of years a student is eligible for Pell Grants, the most extensive Federal grant program, was increased, making it easier for part-time students to participate in the program; and
- the need determination for "independent" (self-supporting) students was liberalized -- a factor especially important for "re-entry" women.

Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination by recipients of federal education funds. Virtually all public elementary and secondary schools, as well as most colleges and universities, are covered by Title IX.

The key section of this law provides that:

> No person in the United States shall on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.[18]

The final Title IX regulation, issued in 1975, addresses a number of issues of importance to vocational education programs.[14] For example:

- schools cannot "provide any course or otherwise carry out any of its education program or activity separately on the basis of sex, or require or refuse participation therein by any of its students on such basis, including ... industrial, business, vocational, technical, home economics, ... and adult education;"

- schools "shall not discriminate against any person on the basis of sex in the counseling or guidance of students or applicants for admission." Further, they cannot use discriminatory appraisal or counseling materials. Also, if a school "finds that a particular class contains a substantially disproportionate number of individuals of one sex," the school "shall take such action as is necessary to assure itself that such disproportion is not the result of discrimination on the basis of sex in counseling or appraisal materials or by counselors;" and

- with a few exceptions, institutions cannot "on the basis of sex, provide different amounts or types of [financial] assistance, limit eligibility for [financial] assistance ... or otherwise discriminate."

Regarding textbooks and curriculum material, the Title IX regulation says that:

> nothing in this regulation shall be interpreted as requiring or prohibiting or abridging in any way the use of particular textbooks or curricular materials.

Although blatant sex discrimination in vocational education programs remains commonplace, the Office for Civil Rights (which has the responsibility for enforcing Title IX) has not taken effective action to end this discrimination. For example, during the 1976 consideration of the Vocational Education Act, the director of the Federal Office for Civil rights testified that around three-quarters of the 1400 vocational schools they surveyed offered five or more single sex courses. Additionally they found 21 single sex schools.[15]

The most significant recent activity by the Office for Civil Rights regarding sex discrimination in vocational education was the March 1979 issuance of "Guideline for Eliminating Discrimination and Denial of Services" in vocational education programs.[16] These guidelines, which outline the civil rights responsibilities of states receiving federal vocational education funds, were issued by the government under court order. Still, despite this and other requirements of the same court order, enforcement of civil rights in voca-

tional education programs (especially rural programs) is negligible.[17]

Increasing Options for Rural Women and Girls

The proceeding chapters suggest that the following four goals are especially important for increasing the options and opportunities of rural women and girls.

- Remove sex bias and sex stereotyping from courses, programs, and counseling. While this does not guarantee equity, it is a necessary prerequisite.

- Take positive steps to provide opportunities in nontraditional fields. This requires changes in attitudes and practices by employers and within communities, as well as in the schools.

- Make education and training programs more accessible to rural women and girls. This includes working to overcome some physical constraints as geographic isolation and the lack of such support services as child care.

- Prepare women for entrepreneurship and develop their management skills. Because of limited employment opportunities in rural areas, women need to know how to create their own employment opportunities.

Legislation, activities or policies which encourage or mandate progress toward any of the above goals are likely to increase educational opportunities for rural women significantly. In general, policies which increase opportunities for women generally will increase opportunities for rural women. Similarly, policies which increase opportunities for rural people generally will also increase opportunities for rural women.

Federal laws cannot, by themselves, change the discriminatory patterns of a society which perpetuate sex discrimination and bias in vocational education programs. Also, these programs are administered by state and local education agencies and the major responsibility to run the educational system rests constitutionally with state governments. However, several federal approaches can be used to increase opportunities for rural women and girls in vocational education. Federal provisions can be mandatory or permissive, outcome-oriented or process-oriented. For example, the federal government could, as a condition for federal funding, mandate or require:

- specific expenditures, such as requiring states to spend $50,000 to hire a Sex Equity Coordinator and conduct sex equity activities;

- activities or services, such as support services; and

- participation by females in activities, such as representation on vocational education advisory councils;

Less prescriptive approaches to encouraging educational equity include federal provisions or programs which:

- provide financial incentives for the four items outlined above, but do not mandate them;

- develop and disseminate model programs and materials for use by state education agencies and local school districts, such as the materials developed under the Women's Educational Equity Act;

- provide funds for implementing programs at the state or local level which foster sex equity, such as the unfunded "second tier" of the Women's Educational Equity Act; and

- provide technical assistance and training to state and local educational agencies.

Finally, federal law can:

- mandate certain outcomes or results, such as an increase in the percentage of female students enrolled in nontraditional fields, while not mandating what specific activities, expenditures or methods a state, school district or individual school must use to accomplish these results.

A closer examination of each of the four goals listed at the beginning of this section will demonstrate how federal policies could improve the vocational education opportunities available to rural women and girls.

The following sections provide, in effect, a "shopping list" of equal opportunities for rural women and girls. Not all of the options offered are of equal importance and some are more politically acceptable than others. But they are outlined to raise issues and encourage discussion.

Removing Sex Bias and Sex Stereotyping from Courses, Programs and Counseling

While rural women are far from a homogenous group, they do share some important characteristics. For instance, they are, for the most part, more traditional and more family-oriented than their suburban and urban counterparts; they marrier earlier; and they have lower separation and divorce rates.

At the same time, many expect to have jobs or careers, and they attain relatively high educational levels. They expect to be (and often are) both full-time wage earners and full-time homemakers. The rural "superwomen" who hold jobs, have sole responsibility for homemaking and child care, and "help out" on the family farm or with their husbands' small businesses are not uncommon.

Given this background, it is especially important, albeit difficult, for schools to offer women in rural communities programs which are free of sex bias and stereotyping -- and which provide females with as many employment options as possible. It is a vital, but not a simple, task for rural communities to develop programs which help women improve their economic prospects without alienating those very women by violating the traditional norms of their communities.

Federal provisions could hasten the elimination of sex bias and stereotyping in courses and programs by mandating specific activities, such as:

- requiring that states spend a specific amount or percent of their federal vocational education funds on efforts to eliminate sex bias and discrimination in their programs;

- requiring that vocational education teachers and counselors receive in-service and other training to familiarize themselves with sex bias, the changing patterns of work of women, and ways to assist girls and young women in making sound career/job choices;

- requiring that state vocational education plans include outlines of specific affirmative and remedial steps to eliminate bias and stereotyping in courses, programs and counseling. Current provision of the Vocational Education Act have been only minimally successful; and

- requiring that the State Sex Equity Coordinator or the State Advisory Council, or both , review courses and programs for bias, that they make recommendations for improvement, and that the state and local education agencies make programmatic changes based on these recommendations.

Permissive legislative activities aimed at eliminating bias and stereotyping include:

- funding the development and dissemination of nonbiased curriculum, teacher training, recruiting and counseling materials, paying special attention to identifying innovative approaches which increase the job options of women;[18] and

- providing technical assistance, training or materials to aid states and schools in eliminating sex bias from their courses

and programs, through such vehicles as the Vocational Education Act and the Women's Educational Equity Act.

Federal legislation could also foster sex equity in courses, programs and materials by:

- requiring that states and localities demonstrate progress in this area, but giving them full control over the method by which they achieve progress.

Finally, Title IX's mandate for nondiscrimination provides an important backdrop to efforts to eliminate bias from programs, counseling, and materials. Title IX can be used to address discriminatory admission to classes or in counseling systems which lead to a "disproportion" of one sex or another in classes. However, regarding textbooks and curriculum materials, nothing in the Title IX regulation either requires or prohibits the use of particular textbooks or curriculum materials. And, as a practical matter, Title IX is not the most effective vehicle for rectifying subtle sex bias.

Provide Opportunities in Nontraditional Occupational Fields

Increasingly, rural women of all ages -- single, married, and divorced -- are entering or re-entering the paid labor force. They are most likely to be in sex-segregated jobs and earning half the salaries of their male counterparts. They probably have little or no chance of advancement on their current jobs. Even if their employer discriminates against them, their geographic isolation, the lack of other job opportunities, the traditional values of the community (and the women themselves), and lack of information about job rights make remedying or ending the discrimination especially difficult.

Traditional attitudes regarding "suitable" employment for women and limited resources make it unlikely that most rural states and school districts will, on their own, initiate programs aimed at providing rural women and girls with ready access to nontraditional training programs. At the same time, many of these women and girls will some day need nontraditional skills; and local initiatives are often vital to making progress towards sex equity, especially in rural communities. Providing women with these nontraditional options in any setting is not easy and requires a conscious effort by educators.

In a joint report on sex equity in vocational education, the National Advisory Concil on Women's Educational Programs and the National Advisory Council on Vocational Education stressed the importance of a deliberate planning process.

> It appears that the greatest increases in women's enrollment in nontraditional programs occurred in states where a true planning process occurred, i.e., where detailed plans for the eradication of identified problems were formulated and where efforts to achieve sex equity extended

beyond a mere rehashing of the verbiage of the legislation and the regulations.[19]

Following are examples of ways the federal government could mandate or encourage increased opportunities for rural women in nontraditional fields, programs, and jobs.

- Require that states spend a certain amount or percentage of their federal vocational education funds to encourage women to enter nontraditional occupations. Or, alternately, require that a certain percentage of the state grant be made available to local education agencies, perhaps on a competitive basis, to fund local programs to encourage women to enter nontraditional occupations.

- Require that teachers receive appropriate training for encouraging women to enter nontraditional fields and for working with rural businesses to increase nontraditional employment opportunities for women.

- Encourage or require states to bring students into contact with "nontraditional role models" through special programs, site visits, and visiting instructor arrangements.

- Use Work-Study and Coop placements to get potential employers used to the idea of seeing men and women in nontraditional jobs.

- Fund technical assistance programs, and the development and dissemination of recruitment, outreach, curriculum and teacher training materials aimed at expanding opportunities in programs and in rural labor markets.

- Provide financial and other incentives to encourage employers to hire women and men in nontraditional fields by, for example, reducing the percentage of a student's salary which an employer pays under the College or Voc Ed Work-Study program for nontraditional job placements.[20]

- Require that postsecondary institutions place a certain percentage of their students receiving College Work-Study funds in nontraditional jobs. Or, modify the formula used for determing eligibility for federal support financial assistance to provide incentives for students to enroll in nontraditonal fields. For example, the financial aid formula could be adjusted to provide higher dollar awards, to increase the proportion of aid which is a grant (rather than a loan), or to increase the loan repayment period.

- Require that states and schools document progress made to reduce sex segregation and stereotyping in programs and on teaching staffs as a condition for eligibility for federal

vocational education funds. Similarly, require that the annual program accountability reported (under the Vocational Education Act) contain evidence of concrete efforts to foster sex equity, such as increases in the number and percent of females enrolled in traditionally sex stereotyped courses and programs.

All of the above are programmatic approaches to providing nontraditional opportunities for women and girls in nontraditional fields. A civil rights approach can also increase the opportunities. The Title IX regulation specifically prohibits sex discrimination in admission to vocational education programs. Additionally, if there is a "disproportion" of one sex in a nontraditional class, the institution might be in violation of Title IX. Strong enforcement of these provisions by the Department of Education could provide a potent complement to programmatic efforts to end occupational training segregation.

Make Education and Training Programs More Accessible to Rural Women and Girls

Access to vocational education programs -- at the secondary and particularly at the postsecondary level -- is often a major problem or rural Americans, especially women. Limited cash resources, geographic isolation, the lack of public transportation and important support services (such as child care), and the meager program offerings all contribute to restricting the access of rural women to training programs. Those most in need of further training opportunities often have the least opportunity to receive them: the teenage mother, the displaced homemaker who must return to the work force, or the mother who needs to find paid employment to support her family.

One possible approach to this dilemma is to use the media to reach rural women and girls. Most people in this country have access to television and radio, including public and educational stations. Because of the substantial child care and home responsibilities of many rural women, radio and television instruction could be an especially effective way of reaching them.

Strategies that could be employed to increase the access of rural women to vocational education training programs include:

- requiring that a certain percentage or amount of federal vocational education funds be spent on supportive services, such as child care and transportation; and

- requiring that states conduct an assessment of child care and transportation needs and that they demonstrate efforts to address these barriers effectively.

In addition, incentive funds could be provided for:

- developing open and closed circuit television as a delivery system for educational services to rural people;
- developing innovative uses of broadcast as a delivery system of educational services to rural women, as well as the nationwide replication of successful innovations;
- publicizing the fact that the federal formula for determining "financial need" (and, hence, eligibility for federal student financial aid) includes the cost of child care and transportation -- two items of special importance to rural women.
- having outreach or satellite programs in rural communites.

Or, the federal strategy could focus on outcomes, by:

- requiring that states show in their state plans, or as a condition for federal funding, that necessary supportive services are provided and that participation by women in vocational education programs is not limited by the absence of services (but not requiring a set expenditure to accomplish this aim).

Title IX clearly prohibits discriminatory admission of students to education and training programs and courses. It does not require that an institution have any specific supportive services, but it does require that all services and programs be nondiscriminatory. Additionally, if the presence, or absence, of certain services has disproportionate impact on women (or men), the institution could be in violation of Title IX.

Prepare Women for Entrepreneurship and Develop Their Management Skills

Rural economies are generally simple, with one or two, if any, major industries. There is rarely a specialized, differentiated job market. In many rural areas, the economy consists of a variety of micro-businesses, and women often play a key role in these cottage industries, seasonal shops, small farms, and craftworks. These small-scale businesses provide the primary source of new jobs in many communities.

A substantial number of rural women fall into the "traditional" role of silent, but active, partners in family businesses or on family farms. These women, who define themselves as "housewives" or "farm wives," are, in fact, managers and accountants of these small businesses.

A surprising number of rural women are self-employed, small scale entrepreneurs. Indeed, for the traditional rural women who has

substantial homemaking and child care responsibilities, self-employment may be the only "paid" employment possible.

Although female rural entrepreneurs and "farm wives" are important components of the rural economy, they often do not appear in official labor statistics. Vocational education training programs have only rarely been responsive to the needs of women who will be (or who already are) self-employed, or to the needs of women who are partners in a family business or family farm. These women need training in marketing, management, accounting, and tax planning. Vocational programs have traditionally taught women to be employers and homemakers -- not entrepreneurs, managers or employers.

Rural schools, with their limited course offerings, are unfortunately the least able to develop successful programs for entrepreneurial and management training. It may be that more generic vocational education training is needed in rural areas, integrating business and management skills into every aspect of the curricula. This approach would serve the dual purpose of teaching important business skills and reducing the traditional sex segregation of vocational education courses.

Entrepreneurial and management training could be supported in a number of ways, by mandating or requiring certain expenditures or activities, including:

- requiring that state vocational education plans include specific methods which the state will use for providing entrepreneurial training and increasing the number of women and girls enrolled in management training;

- requiring states to fund training and other activities to promote entrepreneurship, especially by women. Activities could include continuing education courses for women who are already self-employed, bringing women entrepreneurs and managers into the classroom as role models, and work-study or coopertive education placements with female entrepreneurs;

- requiring membership of women entrepreneurs, or women in small or family businesses, on state and local vocational education advisory councils;

- establishing a special program (or "set aside" funds) for entrepreneurial training or to subsidize the initial costs of these training prorgrams through such authorities as the Vocational Education Act, the second tier of the Women's Education Equity Act, and local development acts;

- providing materials and technical assistance to help states, districts, and schools develop programs which foster entrepreneurship and management training for women. For example, materials which could be used in traditionally female or

business courses which encourage girls to consider self-employment, materials which could be used in child-care classes to encourage students to explore opening child-care centers, recruitment and outreach materials, and teacher training materials; and

- revising the eligibility requirements of the College Work-Study program to permit placement of students with women entrepreneurs or in small women-owned businesses. (Currently College Work-Study students can only be placed in jobs with non-profit and public institutions.)

In addition to the above programmatic approaches to preparing women for entrepreneurship and to developing their management skills, enforcement of Title IX could be of assistance in some instances. Institutions cannot deny women access to these classes and a "disproportion" of men in these classes could indicate a violation of Title IX.

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Numerous legislative and policy vehicles exist to make the vocational education opportunities available to rural women and girls more equitable. Of course, federal provisions alone cannot change the social attitudes and discriminatory practices which relegate women in vocational education programs -- especially rural women in these programs -- to the back of the educational bus. Federal legislation and policies can, however, provide important incentives and leadership for making equal educational opportunities truly available to rural women. For example, federal laws and regulations can encourage or require specific activities or expenditures aimed at eliminating bias and discrimination in these programs; and federal statutes can require that states document progress as a condition for continued federal funding, leaving the specific methods up to the state or local school district. Finally, vigorous enforcement of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 in vocational education programs would send school administrators a strong message that sex discrimination in these programs must be eliminated.

Notes

1. This summary of federal legislation affecting rural women focuses on four key programs in the Department of Education. A more comprehensive analysis could include programs in the Department of Agriculture (such as the Extension Service, the Food and Nutrition Service, the Rural Development Service, the Youth Conservation Corps, and the Farmers Home Administration), the Department of Labor (such as the Job Corps and the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act), and other programs in the Office of Indian Education, the Fund for the Improvement of Post-secondary Education and the National Institute of Education).

2. Education Amendments of the 1976, Sections 201-204, 20 U.S.C. Sections 2301 et seq.

3. U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Education and and Labor, The Vocational Education and National Institute of Education Amendments of 1976 (report Together with Additional Views), House Report 1085, 94th Congress, 2nd Session, 1976, 21.

4. Ibid., 23.

5. This support was indicated in a letter from Marjorie Lynch (Under Secretary, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare) to Carl D. Perkins (Chairman, Committee on Education and Labor, U.S. House of Representatives), dated February 11, 1976. Speaking for the administration, Lynch submitted specific amendments to "indicate that on of the purposes of the legislation is to support programs which would contribute to eliminating sex discrimination in vocational education"; to "require that persons experienced in dealing with the problems of sex discrimination...be included on...vocational education advisory councils"; to "require that vocational education programs operated by local education agencies address the problems of individuals in ...occupations which have been open primarily to members of the opposite sex"; to require that local education agencies provide support services of special importance to women; and to "require the state, in developing its annual plan, to assess its progress in reducing sex bias and sex stereotyping in vocation education programs" and "to establish program objectives for opening to members of both sexes vocational education programs traditionally enrolling primarily members of one sex."

6. These figures were derived from unpublished data developed by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, April 1981.

7. Draft report submitted to the National Institute of Education by David Long and Robert Silverstein, for the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, Washington, D.C., 1981.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid., 17-18.

10. Ibid., 19-20

11. Vocational Educational Equity Council, "Sex Equity Progress Report," paper presented at the American Vocational Association Convention, Anaheim, California, November 30 - December 3, 1979.

12. For further information, see Margaret C. Dunkle, Financial Aid: Helping Re-entry Women Pay College Costs (Washington, D.C.: Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, 1980).

13. Education Amendments of 1972, Section 901(a), 20 U.S.C. Section 1681 (1972).

14. The final Title IX regulation, 45 CRF Part 86, can be found at 40 Fed. Reg. 21428-45 (June 4, 1975).

15. U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, 23.

16. Vocational Education Programs, Guidelines for Eliminating Discrimination and Denial of Services on the Basis of Race, Color, National Origin, Sex, and Handicap at 44 Fed. Reg. 17162 - 75 (March 21, 1979).

17. See, for example: Southeastern Public Education Program of the American Friends Service Committee, Almost as Fairly: The First Year of Title IX Implementation in Six Southern States (Atlanta: Southeastern Public Education Program, 1977); and Phyllis McClure, Title VI and Title IX Compliance by the Office for Civil Rights in State-Operated Special Purpose and Vocational Schools Pursuant to Adams v. Mathews (New York: NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., 1976); and Project on Equal Educational Rights, Stalled at the Start: Government Action on Sex Bias in the Schools (Washington, D.C.: Project of Equal Education Rights, 1978).

18. Some such materials have been developed by projects funded by the Women's Education Equity Act. Dissemination and development of additional materials specifically aimed at rural communities are much needed activities, such as curriculum materials aimed at encouraging women to enter such fields as vocational ag[illegible]culture. Also, information aimed at women and girls regarding such [illegible]ues as rural women's history, farm management, marketing and production [illegible]d be useful.

19. National Advisory Council on Vocational Education and National Advisory Council on Women's Educational Programs, Increasing Sex Equity (Washington, D.C.: NACVE and NACWEP, 1980).

20. This option, and the following option, would both require changes in the student financial assistance statutes and, as such, are likely to be controversial in the higher education community.