REDEFINING 'FARMER':
AGRARIAN FEMINIST THEORY AND THE WORK OF SASKATCHEWAN FARM WOMEN

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LISA M. FAYE

REDEFINING 'FARMER':

AGRARIAN FEMINIST THEORY AND THE WORK OF SASKATCHEWAN FARM WOMEN

by

Lisa M. Faye©

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to explore the conceptual and experiential nature of work and identity as it relates to the lives of five farm women in rural Saskatchewan. This project examines the term 'farmer', developing an understanding of the identity farm women form in being part of a farming operation. One of the p urposes of feminist theory is to help people reconfigure dominant ways of thinking. I n this thesis I utilize concepts from standpoint feminist theory and socialist feminist theory in an attempt to rethink the identity category 'farmer' by constructing an agrarian feminist theory. Clearly, an agrarian feminist theory is key in a revision of the work of farm women. Therefore, this research is intended to define a theoretical framework useful in constructing an agrarian feminist theory in order to compel c hanges in the farming communities of Saskatchewan.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 3: Perspectives on Work (cont'd)

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF APPENDICES

Chapter 1: Introduction

> [F]arm women ... face a complex array of challenges. Their position remains largely invisible, their farm work unremunerated, and, indeed, their status as legitimate 'farmers' unrecognized (Wiebe, Farm Women 137).

The purpose of this research is to explore the conceptual and experiential nature of work and identity as it relates to the lives of five farm women in rural Saskatchewan. This project examines the term 'farmer', developing an understanding of the identity farm women form in being part of a farming operation. The patriarchal nature of farming compels farm women to resist the identity category 'farmer.' One of the purposes of feminist theory is to help people reconfigure dominant ways of thinking. In this case I hope to rethink the identity category 'farmer' by constructing an agrarian feminist theory. As Roslyn Bologh notes: "The question of difference is one with the question of identity. It is becoming the critical question for feminist theorizing ... as feminists begin to question and challenge the implicit male perspective of the dominant paradigms..." (as quoted in Reinharz 3). This research is intended to define a theoretical framework useful in constructing an agrarian feminist theory in order to compel changes in the farming communities of Saskatchewan.

It is important for farm women's work to be described and understood from their own perspective. The limitations of statistical research with farm women are discussed in this thesis (Chapter 3). Clearly, to minimize this work is to render farm women an invisible category within feminist theory; to attempt to simply quantify this work is to silence farm women. It is important that a discourse be created in order to develop a

space for Saskatchewan farm women within feminist dialogue. This discourse can be a space of transformation, a space of consciousness raising and a space to change the face of farming in Saskatchewan. This research is intended to assist in creating this space.

1.1 Defining the Terms

Before outlining the scope and content of this thesis I would like to define two terms I use throughout: 'farm woman' and 'work.' These definitions are necessarily broad, as I have generally invited participants to define words and terms for themselves. First, I would like to examine the term 'farm woman.' I chose this term very carefully, after considering alternatives such as 'female farmer' and 'rural woman.' The former, 'female farmer,' seems to coerce the participant into defining herself as a 'farmer,' a label I thought some farm women might reject.[1] I easily dismissed the latter term because 'rural' is too broad. It disconnected the research from my original intention which was to focus on women who live and/or work in the farming environment. The term 'farm woman,' on the other hand, simply implies that one identifies with the category 'woman' and associates oneself with a farming situation.[2]

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[1]In fact, only one of the five participants in this project strictly rejected the label 'farmer.' A second participant expressed difficulty with the identity category, but seemed to 'talk herself into it' after some time.

[2]I have to note that I did fear that this term would marginalize women who did not reside on a farm. My fears were alleviated as two of the five women eager to participate in the project lived in a town, but still identified with the label 'farm woman.'

Defining 'work' was difficult as I began to recognize the particularly multidimensional nature of farm women's work. Cooper clearly illustrates the difficulty involved in defining 'work' as it relates to farm women. The relationship, both physical and emotional, between the farm and the family makes defining the beginnings and end of work vague: "This interpenetration of kinship and capitalism may well lead 'to analytical and political confusion when farm women are studied through individualized models appropriate to urban women.' What some writers are beginning to recognize is that the family farm involves women on many levels and that peril awaits the scholar who too narrowly defines the scope of farm women's activities" (169).

Clearly farm women's work is made complicated by the relationship between family and business. This makes it very difficult to distinguish between family work and farm work. I came upon many articles that would dismiss certain aspects of farm women's work in order to simplify the study. This simplification diminishes the complex nature of farm women's work. In order to overcome this limitation here I build on the research of both Mareena McKinley Wright and Bettina Aptheker. McKinley Wright developed a continuum of work specifically in regards to the examination of farm women's work. She rejects current theories used to examine women's work, including the separate sphere model (private and public) and the dual labour market model (formal and informal). She abandons these dualistic models as too simplistic, and feels they conceal important facets of women's work. Rather McKinley Wright conceives of farm women's work on a continuum. This allows for a more inclusive definition of work, including facets that have generally been disregarded (as discussed in Chapter Three). Yet, despite

its usefulness, McKinley Wright's model overlooks some essential factors of farm women's work. She identifies three dimensions of women's labour: "economic benefits, physical location, and time control characteristics" (217). Yet she disregards farm women's volunteer work in her examination because she characterizes this work as having no "direct impact on the family economy" (218). I strongly disagree with this assumption, and evidence to the contrary is provided later in this thesis.

I would like to add to McKinley Wrights's notion of a continuum, utilizing the work of Bettina Aptheker who encourages researchers to explore the "dailiness of women's lives" (39). Aptheker writes:

> By the dailiness of women's lives I mean the patterns women create and the meanings women invent each day and over time as a result of their labors and in the context of their subordinated status to men. The point is not to describe every aspect of daily life or to represent a schedule of priorities in which some activities are more important or accorded more status than others. *The point is to suggest a way of knowing from the meanings women give to their labors.* The search for dailiness is a method of work that allows us to take the patterns women create and the meanings women invent and learn from then. If we map what we learn, connecting one meaning or invention to another, we begin to lay out a different way of seeing reality. (emphasis added 39)

Aptheker articulates the liberal way in which I hope to define work within the context of this thesis. I do want to record the daily work of farm women, but more importantly I want to understand what this work means to the participants. I will do this by looking for patterns, mapping, and connecting the participants' diverse ways of understanding their lives. In this way we may be able to appreciate more fully the concept of work within farm women's lives and identities.

In order to understand my motivation in writing this thesis, I would also like to introduce some of the research already conducted around farm women and work. Here I hope to show how this thesis takes a different approach to definitions of work. Furthermore, I look to the participants in this project, gauging how their experiences of farm life reaffirm or refute previous findings in research with farm women.

1.2 Studies of Farm Women and Work

While farm women and urban women share many aspects of their work there are many themes particular to discussions of farm women's work and research with farm women's work. In this section I would like to look at some of those issues.

For most studies of farm women's roles in relation to on farm work, off farm work, domestic duties, and child-care have been largely based on statistical data. As Barbara Cooper remarks, "there is no better research tool than the ability to listen to what farm women can tell us about their own experience. Perhaps it is from there (before one even looks at census data) that a more complete understanding of farm women can emerge" (180). In order to create change inducing theory with farm women, one must learn about conditions from those located in the setting. Most qualitative studies of Canadian farm women's work have been exemplary in their presentation of the experiences of farm women, but still problems exist. For example, Parvin Ghorayshi's case study of fifteen farm women in Quebec is an extremely useful tool in understanding the lived experiences of farm women. Ghorayshi employed both surveys and open-ended interviews in an attempt to "demonstrate the absolutely essential nature of the

contributions of farm wives for the maintenance of family farm enterprises" (572). The study includes discussion of domestic work, off-farm work, community work, farm management work, and women's work in direct farm production. However a problem that is apparent in Ghorayshi's research is in the presentation of the findings. The women who participated in the study are silenced in the discussion of the research. Typical of research that incorporates surveys and interviews, Ghorayshi spends a great deal of time discussing the findings of the survey, infrequently quoting the participants (for further examples, relating to farm or rural women, of the concurrent use of surveys and interviews and this resulting silencing see: Bokemeier and Tait; Koski; Cebotarev, Blacklock, and McIsaac). This silencing is a great problem faced by farm women and I hope that this research project has succeeded in placing the voices of the participants front and centre.

Carolyn Sachs' book, The Invisible Farmers: Women in Agricultural Production, is another example of a commendable qualitative examination of farm women's work. Sachs conducted "twenty-one in-depth interviews with farm women" (xiii) in Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana (76). From these interviews she identifies four types of farm women: widows, single women, women married to men who are not farmers, and women married to farmers (xiii). She provides comprehensive discussion of the lives of eight of the participants (two from each of the identified types). Sachs discusses the difficulty that these women have in defining themselves as 'farmers.' She also discusses the patriarchal nature of the family farm. I am uncomfortable with Sachs' definition of 'types' of farm women, because her categories define positionality purely based upon relationship to

others - namely men. I have avoided this generally in my work, focusing on individual relationships to work. Still, Sach's research is a rich example of qualitative research with farm women. Canadian farm women, especially those in Saskatchewan, have been under-represented in studies of this type and my research will help to fill gaps in Canadian literature.

A qualitative study that focuses on rural Saskatchewan women is Seena Kohl's book, Working Together: Women and Family in Southwestern Saskatchewan. Kohl examines the roles of family members in one rural Saskatchewan town. While her research is important in that it describes family member's responsibilities as they are designated and adopted by participants, Kohl spends very little time describing the participant's feelings about these roles. For me, what is most important is essentially not what farm women do, but how they feel about that work and its effect on their lives. Furthermore, Kohl's study, published in 1976, is dated. Farming continues to change, and so the lives of farm women must as well. My research will help update the data currently available concerning Saskatchewan farm women.

Some studies are limited by an idealized perception of farm life. Jensen illustrates this problem precisely noting that:

> The usual image of farm life is incomplete and unrealistic. The pastoral poetry does not mention that farms have become hazardous places to live; big machinery has produced an accidental death rate on Canadian farms which is 20% higher than the national average. Rural water supplies do not come from the babbling brook, as depicted by some television shows, but from wells that are endangered by seepage, changes in water table, drilling for oil and gas, and by seismograph testing. (12)

My study is intended to improve upon these studies as it will be based upon the lived experiences of farm women, thus avoiding the inclination to romanticize farm life.

Another theme in research with farm women is the "multiple simultaneous roles which are thought to be stress producing" (Berkowitz and Perkins 162). Farm women may find themselves performing roles including mother, wife, paid labourer, farmer, and community activist. Boulding notes a study in which farm women kept farm work time diaries. The participants in her study divided their time between field and barn chores, gardening, bookkeeping, being a 'gofer', veterinarian, co-ordinator, nurse, child-rearing, decorating, cooking, maintenance person, routine housework, food planning, food buying, and paid labourer off the farm (268-280). The implications of this multiplicity of roles will be important point of examination in my own analysis of the participants in this project.

I think that one of the most important themes in research with farm women is the invisibility of their agricultural labour. This invisibility is reflected in the lack of personal, public, or governmental recognition they receive for their participation in farm work. As Haney notes: "Work-family relationships in farm family studies ... were generally limited to the impact of farm wives attitudes and helpmate activities on farm production. In short, women were treated as 'factors' in male producers' success" (179).

The invisibility of farm women's work to the larger community is illustrated in the lack of attention they receive from those in the many farm extension services. Hirschmann and Vaughan found similar circumstances in their research with farm women

in Malawi. Farm extension officers visited farmers in Malawi to offer them advice on improving the production of their farms. The researchers found that:

> In most cases the officers talked to husbands only, without the wives present. A few were prepared to talk to the wife if the husband was away from the farm at the time of the visit, but not all. Some of the women pointed out that the extension officer should not always be blamed for failing to talk to the wife, for some women were shy and 'stayed in the kitchen' when the officer was talking to their husbands. (79)

One of the women I interviewed, Julie, described the impact that this invisibility has on her identity:

> As for farming surveys they want to talk to 'the man of the house'. When I try to pursue it they ask when Steve would be available. If the elevator phones for information, they don't ever ask me they wait for Steve. I took a farm woman survey once. They didn't believe I worked those hours and dropped me. Why in the world would I consider myself a FARMER. I consider myself a woman who still tries to pull her weight and gets no credit for it. (Julie Green, emphasis in original)

A 'good' farm woman will reproduce the cycle of agricultural production in an invisible manner. Magically windows on tractors become clean and lunch is brought out to the field. Without recognition for the agricultural labour of farm women, both farm women and farm research will continue to discount the legitimacy of farm women's role as 'farmer.'

I hope to add to research on farm women's work in three important ways: (1) to understand the statistics as lived experiences of farm women; (2) to give voice to the particular problems of an under-represented group in farm literature – Saskatchewan farm women; and (3) to enhance previous research by examining more closely the emotions involved in farm women's work. While this project is important as it adds to current

work in each of these ways, the main purpose is to contribute to an agrarian feminist theory.

1.3 The Researcher as Participant

Before I begin discussing theory, literature, method, analysis, or conclusions, it is essential that I discuss one of the indispensable tools necessary to the creation of this research document - myself, the researcher. Who am I? Where do I come from? Why did I choose this research topic? What do I hope to accomplish in being a part of such a study? According to Elizabeth Whitt, qualitative inquiry is "value-laden, rather than value-free" (407) and Dey notes that "it is better to make ideas and values explicit rather than leaving them implicit and pretending that they are not there" (229). Further, Polkinghorne notes that: "Researchers who work within the context of the methodological pluralism of postpositivist science ... need to begin their work at a deeper level where the assumptions and relationships of the systems of inquiry themselves are examined. This deeper level ... places a responsibility on researchers to understand and explain the assumptions they have incorporated into their approaches" (9). I ask the reader, throughout this document, to appreciate my personal values and critique the analysis in light of this knowledge. To this purpose, I would like to introduce myself, my self-identified assumptions, and the social and psychological space from which I began this work.

Born in 1976, I grew up on a farm in central Saskatchewan. With three girls and only one boy, my parents had to find a better way to distribute the labour - the usual

gender specific division was not going to get anything done. The work I did on the farm was much like that of my mother. We were both farm hands, often relegated to the most lacklustre jobs. Though these jobs did not inspire the greatest recognition they were essential to the ongoing success of the farm as the following example clearly illustrates. To maintain the combine (the machine used to pick up the stalks of grain and separate the grain from the chaff) each season we are required to disassemble most of the major components and blow out the chaff and dirt that accumulated. One of the dreaded chores associated with this maintenance is the removal of a very large screw. It takes nearly half an hour wedged underneath the combine to remove this screw. Each year I would be recruited for the tedious chore. Starting the chore I often felt some resentment; why was I not asked to do one of the more prestigious, less tedious jobs? I could be using the air gun to clean out the hopper or using the grease gun to keep everything running smoothly, but I was stuck under that combine removing that screw. As I came nearer to finishing the job I would feel a sense of accomplishment, finally yelling in victory 'It's out!'

The story of the yearly removal of the screw has become a family joke. One morning over coffee my mother and I started talking about this chore. After expressing our frustration with some laughs, I asked my mother why? What was the purpose of this dreaded task? She explained that 'the tension screw' holds the entire combine together. It must be released to loosen the components of the combine in order to get into the smaller spaces for greasing and cleaning. Removing the tension screw is vital to maintaining the combine. Without the removal of this screw nothing else could be done – the combine would not be operational!

This discussion got me thinking about the importance of farm women's work. While often marginal in nature, it is essential to the farm. Without the personal and labour investment that farm women contribute to the operation, far less could be accomplished. The work that women do is often overlooked, viewed as inconsequential or just 'helping hand' labour. While recognition may not be essential to continued labour, I believe it is essential to self-esteem and continued emotional investment in work. This 'recognition' is one of the purposes of this thesis.

This research is important to me because of the personal value that I place in the rural community. Through this project, I hope to find ways in which farm women may be able to see a future in remaining on the farm despite financial and social problems. Throughout my life I have been exposed to the crises in farming. Around the morning coffee table I have listened to my parents discuss their lives within an economic, social, political, and very personal sphere. I am sympathetic to the crises within farming. I want to see a future in which the farm where I grew up would be a viable space for economic and personal growth for potentially infinite generations.

I believe that I come to this research with valuable insight. People who have never lived on a farm may not understand many of the issues of importance to farm women: the need for child-care in rural communities, the relevance of issues of domestic violence, and the systemic sexism in the farming community. I come with insight by virtue of having experienced these needs first-hand, but I hope that this insight has grown and been informed by the words, the voices, and the stories of those who participated in this project.

While my preconceived understandings may be seen by some to taint this study, I would like to insert Donald Polkinghorne's defence of positionality in order to understand how these biases are relevant to all projects: "All of our knowledge is conditional knowledge, constructed within our conceptual systems ... One need not retreat to a complete relativism, however, just because a perspectival or context-bound aspect of knowledge is recognized" (13). Those researchers who attempt to identify facts are bound to the need to find the 'one true story,' and "[t]he 'one true story' is nothing more than a partial perspective claiming generality on the basis of social privilege and power" (D. Smith, The Everyday World 37).

I do not intend this very short autobiography to be the final stage in revealing the researcher, myself, within the text. Throughout this thesis you will find me reflecting and reminiscing. I hope that this disclosure will allow the reader to better see me as an active participant in this research. Including this discussion of my own background is intended as an introduction to one research participant.

1.4 Thesis Outline

With my use of these key terms explained, and an introduction to the literature, in Chapter Two I turn to a discussion of the research design and methods utilized in this project. Methods are of particular importance to me as a feminist researcher. The critical nature of methods is exemplified in Polkinghorne's metaphor of the toolbox (6-7). In discussing methods I hope that I can provide an explanation of the choices I have made in choosing my "conceptual instruments" (Polkinghorne 6). The choice of methodological

'tools' is immense, but there must be some rhyme and reason to the choices researchers make. In discussing method I will make the reasoning behind my choices explicit. Furthermore, I hope that this portion of the thesis provides the reader with a critical framework from which to examine the design, limitations, and results of this research. The second part of Chapter Two provides the reader with an early introduction to the research participants. These participants are primary to this research project and, so, it is important to me that they are introduced early in this paper. Additionally, I hope that these introductions can work as a guide for the reader in contextualizing quotes from the participants used throughout the thesis.

In Chapter Three I review the theory and literature on which I based this project. Three theoretical positions have been vital in informing my perspectives regarding work, women, and, especially, the importance of re-examining the term 'farmer': socialist feminist theory, standpoint feminist theory, and agrarian feminist theory. The second part of this chapter, a thematically organized literature review, establishes where research with women and work, women and farming, and Saskatchewan women in particular has been conducted and where I hope to see this research progress in the future. I identify the practical gaps in agrarian literature and explain the importance of this study in addressing these gaps.

Chapter Four is a historical and statistical introduction to farming in Saskatchewan. I believe it is important to 'set the stage' where the research was conducted. A short historical review of farming in Saskatchewan and the circumstances initiating and surrounding the on-going farm crisis is only the beginning. Relying heavily

on government (Statistics Canada and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada) documents, I provide the reader with a statistical understanding of the financial and social circumstances of farming in Saskatchewan past and present. Contextualizing the position of Saskatchewan farm women is extremely important in understanding the standpoint of those who have taken part in this project.

Chapter Five presents 'work' as it is discussed by the participants. I also examine the participants use of the term 'farmer.' This chapter explores questions of identity on the farm: What does a 'farmer' do? What does a 'farmer' look like? Do the participants consider themselves 'farmers'? Why or why not?

In Chapter Six, I point to some areas for future research and action with farm women. While there are many areas of research which I believe are both interesting and important in the development of agrarian feminist theory, this chapter places a great emphasis on the discussion of domestic violence as a major factor in the oppression of farm women.

As it is the major objective of this project to more clearly define a change enhancing agrarian feminist theory, Chapter Seven outlines what I see as some of the major positions of this theory. Utilizing the theoretical description style of Judith Lorber, I delineate the sources of oppression and offer some ideas for change that may be important points of departure for agrarian feminist theory.

In the next chapter I introduce the five farm women who played a central role in this study. After discussing how I came to the interview process, how data was gathered, and how I worked with the interview transcripts, I provide a short biography of each of the women who so generously agreed to be interviewed for this thesis.

Chapter 2:

Research Methods, Research Design and Introduction to Participants

In this chapter I will define and discuss the research methods I chose to conduct this project and provide a brief introduction to each of the five research participants. In part one I review qualitative methods and discuss how I found them appropriate for use in this project. I relate how I chose participants, the problems I encountered in the research setting, and some identifiable limitations of the study. Understanding the choices I have made in gathering and analysing the data in this study is important to a more informed reading of the biographies that compose part two of this chapter.

2.1 Research Methods and Design

2.1.1 Qualitative Research Methods

There are many reasons why qualitative methodology is important and appropriate to this research project. I share Donald Polkinghorne's understanding that the object of the human sciences is to recognize "the meaning an action has for the actor – that is, the purpose an actor has for carrying out that action." Polkinghorne writes:

> 'Meaning' is not a phenomenon that can be subjected to empirical observation. The behavioral aspect of an action appears - and thus can be viewed - in the realm of empirical phenomena, but the 'meaning' of the action does not. Access to this nonobservable realm of meaning is attained by interpretive understanding. ... In explanatory [interpretive] derstanding, we comprehend why a person has done something because we know his or her motive and why he or she attaches importance to the action. ... In explanatory understanding the action is placed in a broader context. (49)

Exploring this type of 'meaning' is the purpose of this research. To simply know what farm women do interests me, but understanding the interactional meaning of that work to their lives is of greater importance to this project. What does work symbolize for farm women? What are the meanings behind work in this context? These questions, in my view, can only be resolved with qualitative analysis.

I recognized the limits of statistical portraits in the midst of this project. I was talking to my father on the phone one morning during harvest. He was upset as the snow had come early and the grain was wet. He knew that he had to harvest it anyway, but the fuel costs alone would never be recovered in selling this wet grain. The costs of seed, fertilizer, and his time would have to be considered a write off. Just that morning I had received Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's latest Data Book – chock full of statistics about farm bankruptcies and FCC loans receivable. Listening to my father, I looked at the book of statistics and acknowledged my purpose in using qualitative methods. This book could never convey the true story of my father. It could present me with a pie chart and project future farm incomes, but it could never listen to the lived experience of those low incomes or the feeling of failure my father expressed. I wanted a story, not a number. The use of qualitative methods is a challenging means of gaining a new understanding of the farm world. Perhaps this understanding can help in producing the change that a recurring book of statistics never does. As Donald Polkinghorne says, "methods and research design for the human sciences must be able to yield information about being human as we experience it as embodied, historical, and integral" (xi). That morning I understood this quote in a new way. There must be a real person behind those

pie charts; understanding that person can yield an entirely different type of knowledge and, perhaps, change inducing theory.

2.1.2 Access to Participants

I chose an area in east central Saskatchewan in which to conduct my research. The participants were found in four small hamlets, each of the towns within 30 kilometres of each other. The area is approximately 250 kilometres from the nearest metropolitan centre, and thus quite isolated from urban influences. Employment in the area consisted mainly of some small business owners, farmers, and those working in a local paper. While most of the residents were born and raised there, the mill did draw several transient community members.

I limited my sample to grain farmers as diversifying the types of farms would complicate the data. Dairy farms, grain farms, and other types of farms vary significantly in the amount and types of work required. Some are seasonally intense while others require constant limited labour. For my purpose of examining the work of farm women, it was best that I limit the type of farming examined.

I began my attempts to find participants by simply taking part in the community. I attended church services, shopped at the local grocery store, spent time at the town rodeo, and dropped in at various community events. I found that my options for community participation were often limited as I was obviously a young woman on her own; it did not seem appropriate to attend a local fundraising dance alone or go to the local bar unaccompanied. While the activities I took part in did help me meet people in

the community, I found it difficult to gain trust. I then began attempts to solicit participants through local agencies, farm organizations, and a Native friendship centre. Finally, I was able to find a farm woman willing to take part in an interview. After the participant found that the interview was comfortable - she noted that she found it more conversational than she had expected - she began helping me solicit other participants.

This 'snowball approach' worked out well but taught me a great deal about the problems that arise in conducting research with people in rural communities. The residents in this community were very private and they seemed quite unapproachable. A new face in the community was a novelty, but people were not assertive in introducing themselves or making a move to meet me. Persistence was the only method to gain participation. Once trust was gained with one member of the community, I felt more welcomed by the community as a whole.

2.1.3 Data Collection

I spent two months, June and July 2002, in the area. I conducted in-depth interviews with four participants. I also worked with one participant who preferred to give data in the written form. The ages of participants ranged from the mid-forties to the mid-sixties.[1] The interviews ranged from 30 - 90 minutes each. The participants and I

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[1]While the average age of participants may seem to be overly representative of an older farm woman, it is important to note that the Statistics Canada 2001 census found the average female farm operator in Saskatchewan to be 48 years of age. Of the 26.3% of farm operators that were female, only 2.5% were under 35 years of age, 12.4% were between 35 and 54 years of age, and 7.3% were over 55 years or older.

discussed the role that they play in the operations and maintenance of the farm, family, and home presently and the changes in these roles over time. I hoped in this way to better understand the ways in which farm women understand and feel about their work. I would like to discuss the three data gathering methods in greater detail.

2.1.3.1 *Interviewing*

The participants were chosen on a volunteer basis as I made the community aware of my research. In talking to women I would often ask them directly if they would be interested in participating and at other times women would openly express interest in being a part of the project. The interview questionnaire is included here as Appendix B. All the interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed with minimal changes in grammar and some changes made in order to maintain anonymity.

My interviewing technique was informed by the methods advocated by Ann Oakley. She argues that "the goal of finding out about people through interviewing is best achieved when the relationship of interviewer to interviewee is non-hierarchical and when the interviewer is prepared to invest his or her own personal identity in the relationship" (41). In other words, the researcher must extract herself from the perceived role of 'knower' as much as possible. The researcher must make participants aware that she hopes to learn from them and their lived experiences. The participants must also be allowed the reciprocal opportunity to learn about the researcher's life history. Although I found that in the beginning of these interviews there was a distinct feeling that the participants and I were playing according to character, this was diffused throughout the interview situation.

2.1.3.2 *Written History*

I was faced with the opportunity to gain the participation of a woman who was reluctant to take part in an oral interview, but none the less very much wanted to be a part of the project. At this point she and I decided that a written history, what I view as part of the oral history tradition, would be appropriate. This participant wanted to use the interview questions (Appendix B) as an outline. I encouraged her to be creative and write freely as well. During this process we were in close telephone contact. The autobiography was transcribed precisely as it was written (with minor spelling corrections) and is being used exactly as the interviews are in analysis.

Informing my use of autobiography, I have looked to Reinharz. She notes that "most feminist oral historians share the goal of allowing/encouraging/enabling women to speak for themselves" (131). I believe that in encouraging creativity, I demonstrate my ambition to have that participant tell her story in her own words.

2.1.3.3 *Participant Diaries*

I asked the participants to keep a diary of their time management (Appendix C). I directed them to complete the diaries twice: first time in a traditionally 'off season' for farming and again in a more active farm season (example: harvest time). The participants were also told that they were free to comment as they chose as they conducted these diaries. I have received three of these five time management diaries by mail. I found these time management diaries to be generally difficult to use as the participants were often too busy to fill out the record until the end of the day. Often at that point it seemed that they had either forgotten what they had done or subconsciously deemed it less

important. For example, doing laundry appeared to take only one hour out of the day when really the participant had been sporadically doing laundry the entire day. Nonetheless, the data was certainly interesting at time and was reflected upon in the analysis section of this thesis.

2.1.4 Data Analysis

I examined my research data adopting tools used in the grounded theory method. As Strauss and Corbin note:

> As with any general methodology, grounded theory's actual use in practice has varied with the specifics of the area under study, the purpose and focus of the research, the contingencies faced during the project, and perhaps also the temperament and particular gifts or weaknesses of the researcher. ... Individual researchers invent different specific procedures. Almost always too, in handling the difficult problem of conceptual integration, they learn that advice given in the methodological writings ... requires adaptation to the circumstances of their own thought processes. (164)

I can not claim to have used grounded theory as a whole, but I have drawn on it as appropriate to this project and to my needs as a researcher (Strauss 7).

An example of how I 'broke the rules' of grounded theory method is found in the concentrated reading I did before entering the field. Grounded theory requires that the researcher "enter interaction with the researched with as open a mind as possible... because a priori theory is based on a priori generalizations which ... may provide a poor 'idiographic' fit of the person studied" (Williams 140-141). This research prior to me entering the field was essential in ensuring that I, a novice researcher, was prepared for a field setting. I tried to enter the field with an open mind to all possible research outcomes

and believe I have accomplished this aim. While this practice does not conform to the strict definition of grounded theory, it speaks to the needs of the research project.

On the other hand, I did find some of the tools of grounded theory method useful in this project. The first tool is the research memo. Immediately after interviewing a participant I returned to my office to listen to the recording of the interview and memo instances that I felt to be "notable moments" (Neff 129). I found that moments felt 'notable' when emotions were raised or resistance was suggested. I listened to the tapes many times and continued to memo in a more reflective manner. This memoing phase of analysis continued through transcription.

The next phase of my data analysis was open coding (Strauss 28-33). I found this process much as Neff describes it: "Open coding, analogous to brainstorming is the most creative coding. I read the data set word-by-word and line-by-line trying to name concepts that emerge from the reading" (129). This stage did feel very creative as I more clearly identified the links I had only hinted at in my earlier memoing. I kept a list of some of the themes I had been finding and directions to the quote that provided 'proof' of the theme. This represents an attempt to make the developing theories verifiable within the data (Corbin and Strauss 161).

Next I employed axial coding and selective coding simultaneously to look at the themes that seemed most substantial (Neff 130). To make this clearer I will provide an example from my data analysis. One of the themes I found in open coding was recorded as: "define their work in terms of what they 'don't do' as opposed to what they 'do do.'" This was a theme that I discovered in every interview. In axial and selective coding I

went back to the interviews with a mind to find more 'proof' of this theme or else some ways in which it is contradicted. In addition I went back to the original 'proof' from the memos and looked for the context of the quote. What happened before the participant defined her work in this way? What kind of job was she describing that she 'doesn't do'? Are there any similarities here? Are there any differences? Open coding developed many themes and this stage was useful in helping discard some and to recognize others.

Staying with the example I give here, I found that most of the participants defined their work in terms of what they "don't do" early on in the interview – often the first time I enquired about their on farm work. Three of the participants told me what they 'don't do' and then felt it necessary to justify their non-participation.

> Oh yeah, yeah. I used to help out [before my stroke], like I say, I didn't drive tractor, because I didn't want to, eh. Well, one year there I did, I picked stones for him and that was it. And then he sold my, it was an automatic tractor and then they sold it and that was it. I'm not picking stones with no standard. (Jane Muller, TP3)

> At age -- I am diagnosed with sciatica and am now waiting on back surgery. In the last 2 years I couldn't truck grain. We quit raising hogs in 1993 and I no longer keep chickens. We have 23 head of cattle, which are fed round bales and chop. I do not do chores in the winter. I can't get a job because of my back. I am not involved in any community activities anymore. (Julie Green, TP7)

> I don't shovel grain, 'cause I'm too old, but other than that, cut grass, everything. (Carolyn Wood, TP2)

In these transcriptions I noticed the use of certain similar phrases in the description of what the participants do not do:

I used to help	I didn't drive
I'm not picking	I no longer keep
I do not do chores	I don't shovel grain
I can't get a job	I am not involved
I didn't want to	*I am diagnosed*

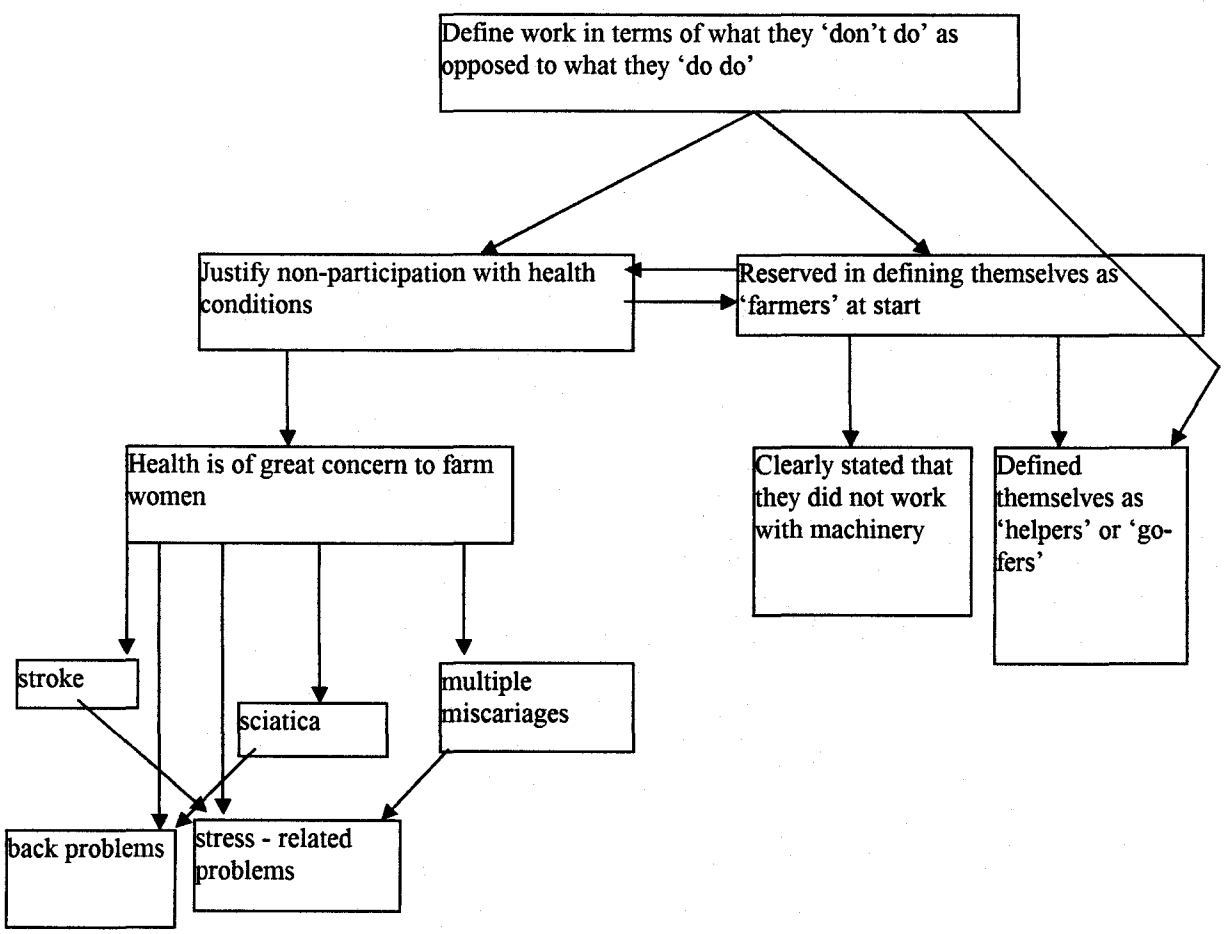
I had to ask myself why these participants were so vehement in describing what they don't do in these terms: 'did not,' 'can not,' 'do not,' and 'am not?' In contrast, why did the one participant only speak in positive terms when discussing her diagnosis of an illness: 'I am?' I considered these terms to be part of the participant's rejection of the title 'farmer.' At the same time, while all of this was happening early in the interviews, I found that at the end of the interviews these same participants often listed multiple jobs that they are responsible for both on the farm and off. The theme was then developed to reflect these attributes. Now it could be referred to as "reserved in considering themselves 'farmers' at start" or "justify non-participation with health conditions." This developing theory is illustrated in Figure 1.

Proponents of grounded theory method encourage researchers to diagram the codes as they work through analysis. Anselm Strauss discusses the purpose of diagramming:

> Even as spontaneous scribblings, they can suggest ways to get off the ground during various stages of the research. They can give visualizations of what's going on with the phenomena under scrutiny. They can yield rough working models in visual form. ... Also, these operational visualizations can sum up the gist of a given work session, so that later one can more easily start from there. ... Still others suggest new concepts and holes in conceptualization, just because the researcher is able to stare at

and be stimulated by a diagram, a matrix, a table of items. These all help our thinking about comparisons and theoretical sample. (143)

Figure 1: Early Visual in Data Analysis



I diagrammed in order to organize my thoughts and this was helpful in data analysis. I believe that this technique will become more central to analysis as I become more experienced as a researcher.

While I have laid these tools out in a 'step-by-step' manner, I would like to note that this was not my actual experience of data analysis. Even in writing the discussion of data analysis (Chapter Five), I found myself continuing to code and question my analyses. In fact, the analysis of the data proved challenging as I became attached to many of my early memoing themes. When I found that they did not work or had to be rethought the process was difficult. I often had to allow themes to be discarded even if I had already spent a great deal of time in developing the theory.

Finally, I would like to note the aspect of theory creation integral to grounded theory methods. Hutchinson asserts that "grounded theory research strives to be paradigm transcending." It "goes beyond existent theories and preconceived conceptual frameworks in search of new understandings of social processes in natural settings" (123). My purpose in this project is to generate new theories about farm women's identity choices. The lived experiences of farm women will be primary in conceptualizing these new understandings. Because of my commitment to go beyond the usual description of work and statistical portraits of farm women's work, I chose to use grounded theory methods to analyse my data.

2.1.5 Ethical Considerations

Field work that requires human participation always comes with a great deal of responsibility. As Dobbert notes, qualitative researchers must focus on the ethical consideration in their project: "This privilege of closeness the informants grant to the researcher carries its corresponding obligations" (as quoted in Whitt 414).

I have used pseudonyms in order to protect the identities of the participants. Furthermore, I will not identify the name of any nearby towns or any identifying details of the location of the research project. Occasionally I have changed the job titles of the participants, but at the same time I have tried to choose alternates that are closely related to the original. Finally, I have concealed identifying factors in discussions of the participant's relatives and friends.

I audio-recorded all interviews with the agreement of the participants (see Appendix A). All recorded material and transcriptions are kept in a secured cabinet. Furthermore, all participants were welcome to discontinue their involvement with the project at any time regardless of the signed consent forms. The interview tapes, transcripts, and individual diaries will all be destroyed within five years of the completion of the study unless the participants have agreed to donate these documents to an archive. The time limit will allow for the data to be formed as papers, presentations, or other such academic materials as I require.

Also, in consideration of the issues that may have been raised in taking part in this project, I left each participant with a list of available resources within the province (see Appendix D).

2.2 Difficulties in Gathering Data

2.2.1 Negative Feelings Regarding Feminism

At times in the course of an interview the discussion would become tense as I sensed a resistance to perceived collusion with a feminist project. For example, one

question asked participants to discuss their partner's efforts in regards to housework. Some participants laughed, while others became defensive of the domestic work roles in the household. The same conflict often arose in issues of childcare; one participant even reminded me that she was not a "women's libber." I had not meant to require the participants to agree or disagree with feminist notions. Under these circumstances I often felt a certain amount of guilt and would automatically retreat. These instances generally tainted the relationship, but rapport was recovered after a short time. Nonetheless my position, as a researcher within a Women's Studies program, did negatively affect the relationship between myself and participants.

2.2.2 Fears Regarding Anonymity

Before interviews began I often had to reassure participants repeatedly that I would not reveal their identities in any way. After interviews I frequently had participants reveal intimate details of their lives that they had been reluctant to share during the taped interview for fear that their partner would find out that they took part in the project. Furthermore, participants often voiced a fear that their partner would find the copies of the time management diaries and question them. Although I told the participants that they did not have to take part in that element of the study, many agreed to (despite fears) as they expressed a need to be represented in the study in all ways.

2.2.3 Presence of Spouses During Interview

In one case I encountered problems as the participant's husband was present during the interview. This limited the scope of the interview greatly. While the participant and I finally decided to leave the space, I found it to difficult to conclude the interview in our new surroundings. Much of the information this participant provided was very useful. Still, I would have preferred the opportunity to conduct the interview in her home without her husband present.

2.3 Study Limitations and Future Research Considerations

2.3.1 Sample Size and Participant Diversity

While the small sample size may be seen as a limitation, I see this study as a starting point for further qualitative studies of farm women. I am not attempting to provide a picture of Saskatchewan farm women in general. The conclusions I draw are purposely limited.

All of the participants identified themselves as older, white, heterosexual women. I found that those who were willing to take part in the study were generally of the less marginalized groups. Further study must be conducted with a diverse range of women, race, ability, and sexuality must be looked for in future research with farm women.[2]

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[2]I did attempt to gain the participation of Native women. I went to a local Native friendship centre, but was told that no one there knew of any Native farm women. I got the impression that the people who frequented the centre were working very hard to simply remain alive in a province wrought with racial inequalities.

2.3.2 Position of the Researcher

I had a personal relationship, on some level or another, with all of the participants previous to this project. Some might argue that this relationship flaws my analysis, as it limits my ability to distance myself from the accounts of the informants. Hammersley and Atkinson argue 'distance' is important in seeing the 'truth' behind the account provided by the participants (as discussed in McKinley, Brayboy, and Deyhle 27). Conversely, I argue that feminist researchers *must not* distance themselves. If, instead, I adopt the method advocated by Oakley, I must accept the words of the participants as a reflection of their personal 'truths.' As Reinharz notes, "Ann Oakley posited a contradiction between 'scientific' interviewing requiring objectivity, and feminist research requiring openness, engagement, and the development of a potentially long-lasting relationship. She advocated a new model of feminist interviewing that strove for intimacy and included self-disclosure and 'believing the interviewee'" (27). In this new model, 'truth' is not the goal. The researcher is interested in listening to the multiple truths as understood and articulated by the participants.[3]

My relationship to the world of farming proved advantageous to this project. As an insider, I understand the need for child-care in rural communities. I know about the problems of 'chaff mouth' in infants as they spend the harvest season in a grain truck. I know that many mothers are forced to leave their young children in the house alone for a short while when they run out to feed the livestock. Unfortunately, because I do have this

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[3]Sandra Acker also discusses the link between Oakley's version of feminist interviewing and the advantages of being an 'insider' in conducting research (193).

insider perspective, I had to constantly be aware of that. I entered the field with certain expectations based upon the roles that I had seen farm women adopt within my own family. On our family farm women played a very large part in all types of work, but the experiences of women on farms differ. Some women fully participate and some may play a relatively minor role in the farming operation. One of the goals of my research is to uncover and give voice to this diversity. Like most researchers, I lived with the tension of my position as both an insider and an outsider. My research was informed by a constant deconstruction of my positionality and data analysis was constantly questioned as I looked for my own expectations creeping into developing theory. My position has led to a hyper awareness of myself as a research instrument and facilitated a conscious consideration of this at every level of my thesis writing.[4]

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[4]Throughout my discussion of positionality I reflected on Acker's paper as she experienced difficulties of positionality in her team research project. The questions she poses about positionality weighed upon me in this project: "Was the insider's ability to see between the lines a useful interpretive tool or a potential bias? Did an insider interview have additional ethical consequences, as participants might reveal more of their personal pain than they might have intended? Should insider status be used in the analysis of the data, and if so, how? Conversely, was the outsider in a better position to take an overview or might she be more readily palmed off with polite untruths? In fact, to what extent were the participants really 'people like us' ...?" (193-194). Who should be interviewing who? To what degree do I qualify as an insider and to what degree are participants providing me with these 'polite untruths'? All of the participants knew that I had grown up on a farm, so did they consider this interview equivalent to talking to a daughter? How did this change the formation of their answers?

Acker further complicates the notion of positionality, discussing a framework for typology outlined by James Banks (195-204). In reading this I realized just how complicated my position is in this research! To begin, I think categorization to be a complicated endeavour at any level. Really, as discussed one can not be simply an outsider or an insider. On the same note, one can not strictly conform to Banks typology either (205). In the end I had to resolve myself to a complicated position, both inside and outside the community of my participants. A quote from Acker's conclusion expresses

All of the choices that I have made in undergoing the research process have been well informed. While I understand that this research project has limitations, I believe that the conclusions drawn are very useful in future research. I hope that this project may be useful in transforming traditional beliefs and understandings of the relationship between farm women, their work, and their identities. Understanding how this information was gathered will help in understanding some of the themes and theories developed through analysis, but more importantly it will help in contextualizing how the participants and I came to discuss their lives on the family farm.

2.4 The Participants

I interviewed five farm women and I would like the reader to meet each of them as individuals. Before I entered the field I read a great deal of research regarding farm women's lives. However, this research did not always mean a great deal to me as I felt the participants were often silenced in the writing phase of the research. I hope that I can overcome this limitation by introducing the reader to these participants early and including their words in all aspects of this writing.[5]

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the feelings I learned to accept in searching for my own position within this research: "[W]e are none of us always and forever either insiders or outsiders. Our multiple subjectivities allow us to be both insiders and outsiders simultaneously, and to shift back and forth, not quite at will, but with some degree of agency .... I do not think the insider-outsider question can be fully resolved. We need to keep it bubbling away, like other troubling research issues, as part of our overall reflexivity about our work" (204-205).

[5]All participants' names and many identifying details have been changed to maintain anonymity. Anonymity was a major concern for many of the participants in this project. While some of the participants describe domestic abuse, a source of shame for

2.4.1 Carolyn Wood

Carolyn is a farm woman in her mid-sixties. She has raised four children on a farm near Smallville. Her children are now all between the ages of 35 and 50. Her husband, James, died a few years ago leaving her with a few acres of farm land, a small herd of cattle, some hogs, and very little financial resources. After his death, Carolyn moved out of the farm house, but continues to be active in grain farming with her youngest son, David. She no longer raises livestock and her land is slowly being distributed among her children. The farm continues to decrease in size, but Carolyn remembers a time when she and James had a very large, if not prosperous, farming operation.

Carolyn married James when she was quite young. They bought a small farm house and some land from James's father and moved out on their own. Carolyn describes those first few years of marriage with a bit of a laugh, but you can hear a note of pride in her voice. She raised children without many of the modern conveniences that today's family would consider essential:

> We bought [the farm] from his dad. We put a down payment on it and then we lived there. And then we had an old house. You can see from the upstairs you could see the stars, 'cause it was cold and then that house burned in 1960, I think it was. From a booker stove or something, it exploded. I just about lost the kids that time. ... And then we built a new house. It wasn't finished for years. Like we had no linoleum or things, 'cause we couldn't afford it. You wouldn't believe it, but we got $2000 insurance. 'Cause we had it insured for that much. (laughs) The people from the community made us parties and donated stuff. Groceries and

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the participants, others simply felt that these discussions were somehow akin to 'airing dirty laundry' (a phrase used by one of the participants in a post-interview discussion).

> canned stuff and clothes for the kids 'cause everything burnt. And the Red Cross gave blankets and stuff. That was in December, so then we moved the little shack to the farm and lived there. A one room shack. (laughs) When I washed the floor in the winter time the water kinda froze to the floor, 'cause it was cold. People would never do that now. (Carolyn Wood)

Living without a refrigerator, keeping the perishables in the water well, and having the children help out with the farm chores, Carolyn and James worked to make their lives more comfortable.

Throughout her life Carolyn has worked sporadically in the paid labour force and full time on the farm while caring for her four children and numerous grandchildren. Carolyn is a very active farm woman. When I asked her to list some of her work she simply replied "everything." When pressed she noted that some of her current duties include hauling grain, cooking meals, filling machinery with fuel, hauling chemical from town and to the field, cutting grass, running for parts, and checking crops.

Later in life Carolyn's mother suffered ill health and moved to the farm. This changed Carolyn's life a great deal. She describes the difficulties:

> Well, she was.... I think 89 when she come to live with us. Because she couldn't live alone anymore. And there was no room in the old-age home at that time, and so I took her home and, and she lived with us for five years. It was hard after, 'cause she was getting to be like 98 and we had to shut the stove off downstairs ... so she wouldn't get hurt or you know. If I went to take lunch out, or help them out on the field or truck grain - at harvest time it was really hard. So [I] used to get my grandchild to stay with her. Had to get a babysitter for her. ... And James really helped me with her. If I had to go baby-sit some place or I had to go make perogies at the church or whatever, he stayed with her. Make dinner for her, and ... but towards the end we couldn't look after her, 'cause if I put her in the tub for a bath she couldn't get out ... I remember a few times [I] had to go to the field almost to get him, 'cause I couldn't get her out of the tub, and ... She had kind of a little stroke, so then I took her to the hospital. ... I kinda

> missed her, 'cause when I come off the field she wasn't sitting at the table. But, no, it was all right. It kinda helped me, because I used to get her old age pension, so ... it was ... I was kinda like getting paid for what I was doing. So, it was like a job. (Carolyn Wood)

Carolyn often describes mixed feelings about the caring work she does, whether it is with her grandchildren, her mother, or the neighbour's children. While she enjoys the experience of being with these people it is a burden on her time and – now with her age – her energy.

Life has changed for Carolyn since James died. When he was alive she played an even more active role on the farm, raising over 100 head of pigs, cattle, and managing a large garden. Despite the decrease in farming responsibilities, Carolyn is finding farm life even more stressful without James around. She is currently farming in partnership with David. Neither Carolyn nor David live on the home quarter (the land where the house, yard, workshop and barnyard are settled) and David has a full time job in the paid labour force. This has forced Carolyn to try to absorb the extra workload. She comments:

> Well, because [David's] married and has two little kids, so if I go out there and help them out then it's easier on them. 'Cause he has only so much time off, so it has to be done kind of quick. Then, when you live on the farm ... they're there every day and we're not. So, we're there for two weeks and we gotta do the work in two weeks what people do in ... months. (Carolyn Wood)

Moving off the farm was difficult for Carolyn. She described loneliness in town, but fear living by her self on the home quarter:

> I said no I couldn't stay there [the home quarter] right from the start. I stayed, [James] died in December, and I stayed that winter. My brother came from Toronto and stayed with me and then my daughter-in-law

> stayed with me until spring. And then the grandkids come and stayed with me and I was never alone till I moved into town. ... Well, I get lonely. I have lots of friends in town now, so it's not bad. I got used to it. ... I do like it, 'cause I have friends and I am not afraid to stay alone here. Like, you know. Like, thunder storms I used to hate and be scared of them. And, like, in town, there's always people around, so I'm not afraid to stay here. (Carolyn Wood)

Along with her emotional suffering she suffered great financial hardship. Vulnerable to farm prices, Carolyn took a loss on the farm:

> Well, when he died the pig prices were very low that year, that was five years ago, so we kinda, almost gave them away and the cattle prices were low. It was very hard, because I had no money. So, my son bought me a house, made a down payment and, and I'm making his payments now, from my old age pension. (Carolyn Wood)

Carolyn is currently making the mortgage payments on her house from her pension which is less than $500 per month. She does grow a garden in town that keeps her grocery bills low, but she spends a great deal of her money on fuel driving from town to the farm. To make matters more complicated she cannot even consider selling any of the land as it has been promised to her children.

Carolyn, like many of the women I talked with, loves the farm and told many stories of rewarding experiences on the farm. She is very close to her children and as a family they worked together through very hard times. Her age has changed her relationship to the land, but she still feels drawn to take a large role in the farming operation: "I miss the farm, 'cause that's all I knew. Like, I couldn't stay here when the kids are farming or harvesting, 'cause I like to go out and help. 'Till I can" (Carolyn Wood).

2.4.2 Dorothy Young

Dorothy, a woman in her early 40's, lives in town with her husband, Charlie, and two of her three children. When Charlie and Dorothy were married they bought the home quarter and Charlie continued to farm with his father and brother. The farm was quite large, but never really successful. There was often fighting amongst the men as there were few financial resources to go around and the boys wanted to be assured of separate land inheritance in the future. This conflict caused both emotional and financial problems for Dorothy and Charlie.

Upon marriage, Dorothy began working in town at the local library. She continued this work up until she had her children at which point she returned home to raise the family. At this point she became very involved in the farm as well. She recalls:

> When they were younger it was, it was very difficult because the kids had to go with you during the day. And you know, every once in a while you could get, you would have a baby-sitter, but they weren't always that easy to get. And so, well, you know the danger of having them with you is constant worry. Watching them, while hauling grain or whatever you're doing. Running meals to the field, sometimes my kids were in the vehicle for 12 hours a day, sometimes they got a bag of chips you know. So it wasn't easy as little ones. (Dorothy Young)

After some time Charlie's problems farming with his father and brother escalated. This situation led to the disintegration of the cooperative farm and Dorothy and Charlie decided to attempt to start a first generation farm on their own. As Dorothy notes this is not an easy course of action: "[I]t's such a poor time to get into farming and, I mean, your only chance of getting in is if you are physically given it, or most of it and you can't just start up, nowadays, I mean it's just too expensive" (Dorothy Young). The

independent farm was smaller, but Dorothy and Charlie understood it as a major step toward independence. The financial strains of the farm were great and this struggle continues today.

With the new independent farm to support the work became even more taxing. Dorothy continued her paid work at the library and worked on the farm as well. Charlie found ways to supplement the farm income, doing custom work for other farmers and starting a home based business. Despite all these efforts, Dorothy and her husband have recently had to sell a great deal of their land, but continue to farm nearly 1000 acres of land.

Part of the land sale included the home quarter, moving the family to town. Like Carolyn, Dorothy is having a hard time adjusting to urban life. She comments:

> I would rather be on the farm than in town. Probably the only reason being because of your privacy ... you're used to not having people be all, you know, drive by and look in your windows. It's, you don't really know how valuable that, that quietness is and privacy, until you don't have it anymore. (Dorothy Young)

Even with a much smaller operation, Dorothy is very proud of her contribution to the farm. She describes her feeling of being 'an insider' in the largely male farming community: "I think you find that 'cause you're out there helping, and you know what's going on and you have more interest in it, other farmers will ask you, well, you know, how's this going or that going and you know exactly what's going on, 'cause you're out there. ... I mean, they ask me, whereas they might not ask somebody else's wife, because she doesn't do anything in the field end of it, you know?" (Dorothy Young). Withstanding her husband's protests (he was present for the majority of the interview),

Dorothy proudly stated that she is a 'farmer'.

Despite the stress involved, Dorothy has enjoyed being a part of the farm. It is her belief that farming represents a family operation – one that everyone must be involved with in order for it to prosper. Dorothy described the fulfilment she draws from being part of the farming operation: "Just the satisfaction of watching a crop grow and harvesting it. It's just, to me, a unique way of life. I mean, we're very fortunate to get to do it. It's just too bad it doesn't pay its way" (Dorothy Young).

2.4.3 Julie Green

Julie and her husband Steve have been working on their farm for nearly 35 years now. The farm is quite large, with well over 1000 acres of cultivated land. In addition to the large investment in grain, the family also raises a small herd of cattle. Julie was in her mid-fifties at the time of this interview and the strain of the farm was beginning to show.

Julie met Steve when they both attended the high school in Smallville. Shortly after they began dating Julie found that she was pregnant and decided to leave Smallville. In the late 1960's, shortly after the birth of her daughter Sandra, Julie decided to return to Smallville to stay with her parents. Upon her return to town Julie and Steve began dating and in a short time she found herself expecting a second child. Julie and Steve decided to get married.

Only days after the wedding, Julie was thrust into the high stress lifestyle of the farm. Julie and Steve had moved in with his parents in order to help out on his father's

farm. While farms have been steadily increasing in size, Steve's family owned a very large farm for that time period, farming more than 600 acres of land. Julie soon learned that this immense farm was always recruiting new workers:

> I never lived on a farm in my life until I got married. Steve was born and raised on a farm and definitely has farming in his blood. When we married we lived with Steve's parents. This experience with farming almost made me quit. It was four months of cramming farming to me. It was too much to learn. I didn't even know how to cook, never mind have any farming experience. ... [O]ne day Steve threw the grain truck key at me and told me I had to truck grain. I had never driven a grain truck, three ton before. I cried and begged so I wouldn't have to do this. I did it plus I had two children in the truck with me. My son fell off the seat and hit the dash, in one of my sudden stops. He got a cut above his eye. I went to the house cleaned it up, put a bandage on it and went back to trucking. (Julie Green)

A few years later there was conflict in the intergenerational farm. Julie and Steve decided to obtain land of their own. This required Steve to take full time work away from the home quarter in the winter. With four children, all between the ages of one and ten, Julie had a great deal of responsibility in these months. She remembers:

> We still had 150-200 hogs, twenty head of cattle. My day consisted of chores in the morning after Sandra and Richard got on the bus. This meant leaving my two little ones in the house. I made many trips back to the house to check on them. I say God was looking after us because they were good and never got hurt. Chores consisted of cleaning the barn morning and night which took about three quarters of an hour. Feeding the cows chop and square bales. So chores took about two hours in the morning. At night Richard would come out with me and Sandra would watch the two little ones. I liked chores at night because I was not worrying every minute. (Julie Green)

Steve and Julie started a small home based business in the late 1970's. Julie was in charge of answering the phones and booking clients. In 1983 the business had grown profitable enough to allow Steve to give up his winter job away from the farm. That

same year Julie began her own off-farm job and took to raising chickens for extra income. With the children growing up Julie began to enjoy much needed help around the house and farm. With Sandra responsible for the majority of the household chores Julie's life became even more immersed in the farm work. As the farm grew so did the work. Soon Julie found herself overwhelmed by the labour demands of the farm. She describes the difficult adjustment:

> When all my kids were in school, things began to change. We were getting bigger in farming I was not so interested in all the work it was becoming. Steve did no house work at all and when it became spring, chores were all mine again. The work was getting more demanding. Steve disciplined the children and that about covers his job with the kids. ... We started arguing more. Steve made the decisions and then we all did the work. I started to feel this way more and more. The more land we acquired, the more work to do. (Julie Green)

As her children slowly began to leave home Julie became very depressed. She spoke of "empty nest syndrome" – a term she has picked up from her children. She describes feelings of isolation and resentment towards the farm. She often spoke of the farm as 'taking the best years' of her life as she now suffers with multiple health problems that slow down her usually hectic schedule. Despite these health problems Steve still expects Julie to undertake the same chores that she was responsible for when she was much younger. This expectation leaves Julie frustrated and overwhelmed.

Julie talks about violence in her marriage and her husband's alcoholism. She has become dependent upon mood stabilizing drugs prescribed by her local doctor. She describes her need for new coping mechanisms:

> I wish I would have gotten counselling when I was young, but there was no where to go. We were taught to keep things hidden that were not so

> good. Pretend you are happy and learn to cope. I spent most of my married life on Valium, ulcer pills and anything I could take to keep me on an even keel. I took sleeping pills so I could pass the night away. I took Valium so I could stay calm. Now I know this is not the answer and it doesn't solve anything. (Julie Green)

Julie's frustration is unmistakable. She looks for escape, but sees no hope for an older woman with no education and no financial resources. She describes a sense of hopelessness:

> When I talk about leaving he says, 'I am not giving you any money.' Wow! It's all about control. I believe if I signed off the land and left no one would miss me. But I hold a half share in this farm and even then it is not worth the hassle of staying for. If I did sign off my half share, no one out there would help me and at [my] age, how would I start all over. Leaving is so much easier said than done. All I ask for is equality. (Julie Green)

2.4.4 Susan Brender

Susan and her husband Jim are involved in an average size grain farm, just over 1000 acres, in south-eastern Saskatchewan. Currently in her early 50's, Susan is very happy with her life on the farm. She has many outside interests and insists that her role on the farm is minimal at best; it seems to me that Carolyn underestimates the essential role she plays in creating a viable farming operation.

Susan grew up on a farm in Saskatchewan in the 1950s. She loved the lifestyle and knew that this was how she wanted to raise her children as well. In the late 1960's Susan married a local boy, Jim Brender, and joined his family's farming operation. The two bought a house in town and each morning Jim drove to the farm, while Susan began working at the medical clinic in Smallville. Over time their family grew and Susan

decided that she would quit her work at the clinic in order to devote herself to full-time parenting.

Susan did not want her children growing up in town and so, in the booming 1980's, Susan and Jim decided to build a home on the farm. Jim farmed in conjunction with another local farmer, Corey. Because of this association, Susan, though she was raised on a farm and understood the workload, was relieved of many of the chores usually designated to a young farm woman. She describes the advantages:

> I think that in the beginning it was easier. ... I think that basically it probably improved our farm income by working in conjunction because when we were younger and working with Corey, we had between the two families we worked with one combine. Ok, so, rather than having to buy two separate combines, if you were working separately, you know, you've cut down on that huge expense of machinery, that there is, in farming ... we were able to increase our income, because we didn't have so much of an output in that area. So, it was good in that way and then also when the children were very small, I mean, we had two men working all full-time, so it was easier for us as wives to be able to look after our families. (Susan Brender)

This relationship continued for many years. The farm work was negotiated between Jim and Corey according to their preferences and the young boys in the two families began to take an active role in the operation. She describes the joint operation:

> [T]he boys used to help with hauling grain, now and then, they would help Jim when he ... had break downs or whatever they would help to fix the machinery and stuff like that. ... They didn't do as much as Corey's family did, and basically that was because the shop and the major supply of the machinery were stored at his farm ... So, us having the new farm here and you know we, we didn't have a shed the first year and so you have to build a shed, ... but still they had the work shed over there where they have the tools to fix these machines. ... [I]t was a division of labour kind of thing. Jim would be sitting on the combine and Corey would be hauling grain. So, his sons were the ones who got into the hauling grain thing before our sons did and sort of helped out more with that job. And

> basically, if you're sitting on the combine I mean, you can take your son on the combine with you, but when you've got a $200,000 machine or a $150,000 dollar machine you don't want to turn it over to a fifteen year old to run... (laughs) so... (laughs)... that was kind of our ... a drawback as far as our children were concerned as far as learning farming and whatever, but it was just the way it worked out for [Corey and Jim] and that was their roles they had picked out from the beginning and that was how it went. I mean, Jim was able to sit for sixteen, eighteen, twenty hours on a combine without a break, you know. And there were many times when they were farming just the two of them he would go from 8 o'clock in the morning as soon as the dew was off the grain and he wouldn't come in until five o'clock the next morning go for two, three hours of sleep and get up and go again. So, I mean, it was just how it worked out. (Susan Brender)

As Corey's boys grew older a fissure developed in the joint operation. She comments on this disintegration:

> I think it just ... the whole thing just got a little bit more complicated as years went on and the children started to grow up, and they wanted to help out on the farm and ... you know ... how ever things were working out, and it just wasn't, it wasn't just [Jim and Corey] then, that were ... in charge, it was two families that were involved and we needed to stop. (Susan Brender)

Dividing up the farming equipment and land, Corey and Jim decided to begin farming separately.

At this point Susan begins describing a much different role on the farm. Although none of the children have expressed interest in taking over the farm, Susan and Jim continue to operate as a team. Susan notes that her role is still limited, but she does describe an active role on the farm:

> My duties on the farm consist of running the household, going to get parts on occasion, making meals and taking them to the field, taking gas to the machines when they're working, combining or seeding or whatever, helping to put the grain in the bins, fill up the fertilizer on the seed drills and so on. Things like that ... just assistant mainly. (laughs) (Susan Brender)

When Susan's children left the farm she began to devote her time to continuing her education and returning to work in the health care system. Her education worked around the farming schedules and the remote nature of farm life, but with some time and effort she graduated from university. She has now returned to her work at the local clinic, a job she enjoys very much.

Susan also describes a very active community life. She keenly recognizes the importance of supporting the local community:

> It's good, it builds community and I mean if people don't volunteer and if people don't get involved then your community falls apart and that's something that you don't want to see happen. I don't mind being involved 'cause then I think I'm doing my part to keep my community together and, and working the way it should. (Susan Brender)

Susan also notes the kinship she feels in working with the other women of the town. She comments:

> I think it's great. I think we get together and we can talk things over and see how each one is making out and joke around and have a little bit of fun and get some work done at the same time. (laughs) And I really enjoy those kinds of times! ... I don't know that you get that sort of same sort of camaraderie going when you basically are in an organization where you go to a meeting and then you go out and do your job. ... I think that when you get together for those work bees that you have for fall suppers and for perogie suppers at the church or even preparing for different weddings and stuff like that there's, there's a different, it's a whole different atmosphere. It's a whole different kind of thing that goes on there. And I think that that's what a lot of our communities are losing, you know you don't get that anymore. And especially in our small farming communities, that kind of thing was kind of like a ... a real community building aspect that we had. Where people got together and they, they shared their ideas and their values with each other. And ... because we don't do that anymore so much ... because so many of the farm women are busy with other jobs besides the farm, off-farm jobs and they can't afford the time to go and do those

> kinds of things with other members of their community that we're going to lose a lot of our small communities spirit that way. You know. It's a real friendship building thing. (Susan Brender)

Susan is very worried about the future of the rural community. With schools closing down and farm people working on farm and off, she recognizes the difficulties of putting time into community building. Worried about the future of the rural community, Susan notes:

> I think that we're moving into a society where ... money is going to be more important than community building. Material things are taking over. Computers and the Internet are taking over a lot of things. ... I think we're becoming more of a society where we sit behind our doors and, and entertain ourselves rather than doing these kind of community things. (Susan Brender)

Susan and Jim continue to struggle with low farm prices and the intense amount of time and labour required for farming. Nonetheless, they have learned to find time to be together as a couple. Susan values the new relationship she and Jim have developed since the children have left the house. Jim appreciates the work she does, both on and off the farm, and he has begun to take a more active role in the home. Susan and Jim seem to have developed a real partnership in their marriage.

2.4.5 Jane Muller

In her late 40s, Jane has been operating a large grain farm with her husband Dale for over twenty-five years now. With over 1000 acres of cultivated land, and no children to help, there is plenty of work to be done every day on the farm.

Jane grew up on a small farm in central Saskatchewan. In the early 1970's she married a local boy, Dale Muller. The two moved to Alberta where Dale began working for the government. His job paid well and the two lived a comfortable life.

After only a couple of years in Alberta, Jane and Dale impulsively decided to move back to Saskatchewan. The decision was made while home to visit Dale's family. Dale's father had heard that a local farmer was selling his land and Dale, missing the farm life, went to speak to the farmer. After bargaining for some time the two decided upon a price and Dale bought the farm. He and Jane returned to Alberta, packed up their possessions, and became farmers.

Jane came to the farm to find an old house with no running water and mice she could hear running in the walls day and night. She nearly burned the house down throwing ashes from the wood burning stove out the window. This was a far cry from her comfortable life in Alberta.

In the mid-1970s, after suffering numerous miscarriages, Jane had her first and only child, Isabella. Carrying and heating water to wash diapers, bathe the baby, and keep the household running was always a challenge. Adding to this challenge, Jane suffered a stroke a couple years after giving birth. Jane's mother came out to help with the farming operation, while Jane did what she could to take care of Isabella and the house. With physical therapy Jane recovered near full physical ability within six months. Jane and Dale began farming with Dale's parents. This co-operative operation did not work out well, and after the first year Jane and Dale decided to farm independently. Jane worked full-time on the farm in the beginning, but as Isabella grew up the young girl

began to take over many of Jane's farm chores. At this point Jane limited her help in the actual farming operation, working in the household and on her garden the majority of the time. Isabella was responsible for a great deal of the field work, driving tractors, swathing, and combining. Still, Jane drove grain trucks, helped to fix the machinery, and ran to town for parts and other farming necessities.

When Isabella left home she continued to return to help with the farm as often as she could, but as her life became more hectic she slowly stopped contributing her labours to the farm. With a successful career in another province it just was not feasible to return to Saskatchewan to help with the farm work.

A few years after Isabella left the farm Jane suffered a second stroke. She lost almost all use of her left arm and leg. Jane never fully recovered from this second stroke and is learning to live with her limitations. She discussed her feelings of frustration as Dale does not understand her abilities and the effects of the stroke: "He still figures it's all in my head, I can do everything, but I'm not trying hard enough" (Jane Muller). Even the simplest tasks like taking a meal out to the field have become time consuming and laborious. She describes a trip to the field:

> I gotta make how many trips out of the house. 'Cause before I'd put everything in a box, carry it out of the house and go. Now I can't carry the bloody box out. I gotta take everything out separately and I hate it. Oh, up and down. It takes a lot of time to get from the house to the car even, eh. To go out to the field and then back in, same damn thing. Lug everything back in, so really that's worse than ever. (Jane Muller)

Jane has also been hospitalized for stress problems. She describes feeling light headed, dizzy, and weak before she went to the hospital:

> Well you're just fidgety and your aggravated and nothing is right and you could just scream. Sometimes when nobody's there I'll go out and I'll just scream out there, just get it out of me. I'm sure the neighbours hear, but I don't care, eh. It just helped, oh God it felt good. You just get, I don't know, just mad. At least that's the way I was. Just couldn't concentrate on one thing, couldn't do one thing, it was just a whole bunch of things doing, eh. Just nothing was right. Just wanted to say to hell with the world and all. You just, you feel your blood pumping in your heart it's just going 100 miles per hour I think. You almost feel like it's going to jump right out of your chest, eh. Oh, it's just wild and then you just settle down. I settled down there and that was it, it was good. No stress happening there, but it's best you just don't really think about those things. (Jane Muller)

The hospital gave Jane time to relax, but they did not provide her with counselling or stress management techniques. Nonetheless, Jane enjoyed her time in the hospital: "I just relaxed, didn't worry about anything out here. Didn't get yelled at, didn't have to do nothing. I was just totally relaxed" (Jane Muller).

Jane describes frequent episodes of verbal abuse, but, as she grows older, she has learned to walk away from these situations. While this decreases her stress for the moment, she knows that there will be retaliation. She notes how her response has changed:

> Now I just get mad, I'm, 'you yelled at me, forget it, I'm gone to the house' and I do. I have done that. 'That's it, I'm gone to the house, you do it yourself now.' ... Well, I'm gonna pay a bit later, you know what I mean. But ... I just won't take that shit anymore, eh. I don't think we should have to. ... [T]hen you don't know if he's coming home at night going to yell at you, 'where the hell'd you go' and stuff. I don't know if it's less stress, it's just the feeling that 'Oh yeah, I did it'! Sort of thing, 'I'll show you'. It feels really good. I haven't done it much lately though. (Jane Muller)

In her late 40's now Jane continues to farm with her husband. She contributes what she can and tries to make Dale understand the limits imposed by her illness. Jane fears the

coming of a third stroke. Her doctors have told her that it is inevitable and she realizes that this will likely be completely debilitating. Despite her deteriorating health Jane enjoys the farm life: "I like the farm living, it's peaceful. But it's stressful, because you have to do these things all the time and you have to be working with the stupid weather. Other than that, I like the farm life" (Jane Muller).

The participants in this project are a diverse group of women, but their stories create a portrait of hard work and determination. They were so giving of their time and their experience. I truly appreciate the time they gave to this project and the perspectives that they shared with me.

While these farm women represent five very different views of the farm, I must stress that this research was not conducted in an attempt to construct a picture of all farm women. Describing a multitude of experiences reminds the world that there is no one 'farm woman.' By celebrating the diversity of experience farm women encounter we may learn to appreciate the multiplicity of identity within the agricultural domain.

In the next chapter I will discuss the theoretical background and literature review that I work with in this project. I understand theories to be explanations for why things are the way they are. In the next chapter I will look to socialist feminist theory, standpoint feminist theory and agrarian feminist theory to better understand the world of farm women. I also look to relevant literature to provide some background to the type of research being conducted with women and work generally and farm women more specifically.

Chapter 3:

Perspectives on Work

In this chapter I introduce the reader to literature that has informed my research. While at times my analysis corresponds closely to already published works, at other times I felt that I was asking questions I had never seen addressed in developed theories and academic research. Here I identify theoretical perspectives that underlie this thesis before turning to relevant studies of work.

3.1 **Theoretical Perspectives**

> [T]heoretical works ... help us comprehend the complexities of society; they must also help us see the transformations necessary to move society to new possibilities - transformations that will hopefully alert us to, and move us towards, greater possibilities for social justice. (Bailey and Gayle x)

Feminist theory represents an attempt to organize and vocalize sources of gender inequality. There is a multitude of feminist theoretical understandings of inequality. Each theory works in relation to other theories; one theory can help to create and develop further theoretical understandings. In this chapter I consider ways in which socialist feminist theory and standpoint theory can be used to inform and develop agrarian feminist theory.

I think it important to introduce the perhaps unfamiliar concept of 'agrarian feminist theory.' Louise Carbert and Nettie Wiebe have been vital in introducing the theoretical position. Wiebe describes the model in the following passage: "The term

'agrarian feminist' ... includes both 'equal rights' and 'social' feminism. Agrarian feminism holds that women are not inferior to men and must be treated as equals. But it recognizes that there are differences in the situation of women and men that stem from social constructions of gender culturally and historically rooted in the agricultural community and that disadvantage farm women and undermine their status as autonomous persons" (Farm Women 137). This definition succinctly encompasses a great deal of what I see as an important change necessary within the agricultural world. When farm people recognize the socially constructed nature of gender differences in work and status on the farm, I believe that real change can take place for farm women.

In developing this understanding, I begin with a discussion of socialist feminist theory and the premise that economic and social systems construct who we are and our possibilities for change. Secondly, I examine the premises of standpoint theory as it urges women to examine and listen to the perspectives afforded women in our capitalist patriarchal society. Third, I look to the links between socialist feminist theory and standpoint feminist theory in understanding connections between work and standpoint. Finally, I describe a burgeoning agrarian feminist theory. I argue that considering these three theoretical positions as interacting and mutually supportive systems adds greatly to an understanding of rural women's positions and perspectives.

3.1.1 Socialist Feminist Theory

The foundation of socialist feminist theory is rooted in capitalism and patriarchy as interrelated systems. In saying this, I am drawing a distinct demarcation between

socialist feminist theory and Marxist feminist theory. While I agree with Tong that the two are very closely related and nearly indistinguishable, I also support Holmstrom in her belief that Marxist feminism places too great an emphasis on class oppression, encouraging women to leave the struggle with patriarchy to be waged only after overcoming capitalist oppression (4). Tong describes the important distinction between socialist feminist theory and Marxist feminist theory very well:

> To overcome what they perceive as the limitations of traditional Marxist feminist thought, socialist feminists see to explain the ways in which capitalism interacts with patriarchy to oppress women more egregiously than men. Although socialist feminists agree with Marxist feminists that women's liberation depends on the overthrow of capitalism, they claim that capitalism cannot be destroyed unless patriarchy is also destroyed and that people's material, or economic, relations cannot change unless their ideologies are also changed. Women must fight two wars, not one, in order to be liberated from the forces of oppression. (119-120)

As I discuss later in this chapter, I understand capitalism and patriarchy as mutually supportive structures in the continued subordination of women. Capitalism needs patriarchy and patriarchy needs capitalism: they are mutually essential.[1] Like a living organism, the two grow and change in relation to one another.

Both capitalists and men benefit from the oppression of women. To the capitalist women represent an inexpensive reserve army of labour. Women can be used, within a capitalist framework, to decrease labour costs, to fill mundane jobs, and to reproduce the labour force, socializing children to be the 'good worker' of capitalist enterprises (Riddiough, 80). Men benefit in much the same way. They gain access to the more

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[1]This is not to say that I adhere to the dual systems theory, outlined by Heidi Hartmann, but rather that I understand the two structures as mutually interactive.

challenging, higher wage jobs and are exempted from household labour, as I discuss shortly. This all begins, socialist feminist theory argues, with the basic unit of our current societal and economic structure: the family.

The family is the basis for capitalist and patriarchal power. Hartmann illustrates this fact thoroughly (112-113). Men enter the capitalist system. They make money that will be taken home to the family to be redistributed. Women take this money and buy goods within the capitalist system. 'Housework' is that work required in transforming the products of capitalism into a usable (eatable, sleepable, etc.) form. Men, with greater access to higher paying work, acquire capital; women transform capital. This leads to a system of dependence that is necessary to patriarchal relations.

So, women are dependent upon men to bring home the physical capital which they then must transform. Couldn't it then be said that both are oppressed by capitalism? Of course they are, but women are doubly oppressed. Hartsock discusses the mutual oppression that women and men face under capitalist systems, but she goes on to say that "the proletariat (if male) is immersed in this world only during the time his labor power is being used by the capitalist" (Hartsock 113). Once the proletariat leaves the work place, he comes home to become the capitalist. He exploits the new proletariat within this new environment: his wife. Hartsock writes: "He who before followed behind as the worker, timid and holding back, with nothing to expect but a hiding, now strides in front while a third person, not specifically present in Marx's account of the transaction between capitalist and worker (both of whom are male) follows timidly behind, carrying groceries, baby and diapers" (113). If according to Marxist theory, the capitalist oppresses the

proletariat, in feminist theory, men are seen to capitalize on the oppression of women. Women are a reserve army of labour, willing to work under poor conditions and for little pay. There are capitalists in traditional work places and there are those who act as capitalist in the home. Now that women most often work both inside and outside the home they are exploited twice: once in low status, low paying jobs and again in doing low status, unpaid work in the home.

The work that people do and the systems in which they do this work, creates an internal and external perception of the self. As Tong puts it, "We are what we are because of what we do – specifically, what we do to meet our basic needs through productive activities such as fishing, farming, and building" (95). Because women are often relegated to the lowest status jobs, they continue to be perceived, and to perceive themselves, as subordinate to men. This is a point that emerges when the farm women I interviewed talk about their lives in Chapter Five.

3.1.2 Feminist Standpoint Theory

In essence standpoint theory states that society has been created and informed by masculine perspectives. As women participate in this society our views of the world around us are influenced – even created - by these perspectives. Standpoint theory, thus, looks to this masculine created culture and these masculine created cultural understandings, as the source of women's oppressions.

As a masculine perspective is the only one given authority, women's oppression becomes systemic and legitimizes itself; it reproduces itself in our institutions and social

interactions, and it is learned and reinforced in society. Dorothy Smith notes the disempowering nature of the systemic degradation of women's standpoints:

> We have difficulty grasping authority for women's voices and for what we have to say. We are thus deprived of the essential basis for developing among ourselves the forms of thought and images that express the situations we share and make it possible to work together. Women have taken for granted that our thinking is to be authorized by an external source of authority. ... The institutionalized practices of excluding women from the ideological work of society are the reason we have a history constructed largely from the perspective of men, and largely about men. (A Peculiar Eclipsing 337-338)

This differential view is created through the fact that men have always had a privileged position in at least some area of life. Being subject, slave, or other affords women a unique standpoint from which to understand and intellectually articulate the world around us.

When people begin to value the perspectives of women, these standpoints can begin influencing the socially constructed culture. Uma Narayan notes the potentially transformative power of giving authority to the articulation of women's standpoint: "The inclusion of women's perspective will not merely amount to women participating in greater numbers in the existing practice of science and knowledge, but will change the very nature of these activities and their self-understandings" (308).

This authorizing of women's perspectives must begin with women themselves. As discussed earlier, the cultural lesson in the legitimacy of men's voices has led to an internalizing of this authority. As Smith puts it: "At the interpersonal level it is not a conspiracy among men that they impose on women. It is a complementary social process between women and men. Women are complicit in the social practices of their silence"

(A Peculiar Eclipsing 337). In a movement towards overcoming this complicit silencing Smith argues that women must, difficult as it may be, learn to value the voices, opinions, and authority of women's words and women's standpoint. She issues a call to action in this matter: "We need to learn how to treat what other women say as a source and basis for our own work and thinking. We need to learn to treat one another as the authoritative speakers of our experience and concerns. It is only when as women we can treat one another and ourselves, as those who count for one another that we can break out of our silence. ... This is the road to full and equal membership in our society for women" (A Peculiar Eclipsing 338).

3.1.3 Socialist and Standpoint Feminism as Interacting Theories

> Because the labor of society is institutionalized into sets of social practices and social relations, by their labor people are thereby producing their whole life. (Holmstrom, Introduction 457)

I see socialist feminist theory and standpoint feminist theory as interrelated and mutually interacting. As discussed above in relation to socialist feminist theory, work creates our understanding of ourselves as social people. The work assigned to people changes how they are seen and how they see themselves. Thus, farm women will understand their position on the farm and their importance to the farm, based upon the work assigned to them.

As an example, let us look at the gendered distribution of labour in the harvest season on a farm. In general, and as described later in Chapter 5, it is common for male farmers to drive the combine (the machine used to pick up the stalks of grain and separate

the grain from the chaff), while female farmers transport the grain from the field to storage bins. So we have the man in the role of actually producing a saleable product - the grain. On the other hand, the woman is in charge of transporting that grain from the hands of the producer to the storage bins. It is not that women are physically unable to drive a combine. In fact, if we look at the generalizations often assigned to women, the work may be better suited to them than men as it requires both patience and precision. Why is the work divided by gender in this way?

We can look to the distribution of resources as a possible explanation for the gendering of this labour. The grain cheque is made out to the male farmer, so men have the money to buy the combine and thus they control the technology. We could look to women's roles in domestic labour as a possible explanation; driving the grain truck allows women time off the field to make sandwiches and coffee for those working on the combine. Or, one could perhaps look to the past for answers to the gendered division of labour on the farm; this is the way work has always been performed, some might argue. Whatever the explanation, the point here is that the gendered nature of work on the farm places women in a position of less obvious importance. Their role seems less productive and less important to the successful operation of the farm. The work assigned to farm women, like driving the grain truck or removing the tension screw from the combine, creates social understandings of women's value on the farm. In turn, farm women internalize social constructions that ask them to question their legitimacy as farmers.

3.1.4 Agrarian Feminist Theory

Agrarian feminist theory is a developing field of thought. This introduction relies heavily on the work of one farm woman, Nettie Wiebe. Wiebe is one of the few authors[2] that have begun the attempt to articulate an agrarian feminist theory, thus I have utilized her work extensively in understanding the current position of the theory.

To understand the unique circumstances of farm women is one of the major directives of agrarian feminist theory. Describing the similarities between urban and rural feminists, Nettie Wiebe notes that "despite a long and illustrious history of struggle, agrarian feminists, like their urban counterparts, have not yet dislodged or transformed the patriarchal structures that characterize their society. The agricultural sector, from the family farm to the corporate agribusiness domain, remains a deeply patriarchal system" (Wiebe, Farm Women 137). While farm women meet many of the same obstacles as urban women, farm women are often overlooked within typical theoretical understanding of women and inequality. Farm women are still dealing with many issues that are no longer at the top of the agenda for urban women. Many of the changes implemented within first and second-wave feminism have not been effective within a rural setting. When the home is the business, as on a farm, do both people lose land - that may have familial history - due to divorce? How far does one have to travel to obtain an abortion? How do battered women escape when they live in relative physical (and perhaps social)

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[2]It is important to note that Louise Carbert incorporates the term "agrarian feminism" in the title of her book. I have not used her work in outlining the theory, as I feel that she does not concretely develop the framework of a theoretical position in the book.

isolation? If a man is ordered to leave the home, in situations of abuse, can he legally be kept from returning to his place of work, which is the home? Many of these issues have not been concretely resolved for rural women. Feminist theory has moved on to a third-wave. We are now theorizing gender, sex, sexuality, and desire, while rural women are left in the dust.

Farm women have struggled on, attempting to develop their own understandings of oppression in this unique environment. Thus far, farm women have been working towards developing an understanding of gender issues as they are unique amongst farm women. As Wiebe writes: "A number of issues, such as education, child care, health care, and other social services are of concern to all Canadian women but have a particular impact on women living in the country-side. Some issues are unique to farm women, such as the ownership of land and the division of labour and income on the family farm ("Farm Women...", 138). So, while farm women may face the same problems as urban women, the environment in which they live changes the nature of these issues. Access to services becomes a much greater concern when distance and availability of transportation become major issues. In relation to all shared problems, the particular perspectives of farm women are seldom articulated and analysed. Farm women represent a minority and, thus, they are often made invisible within society in general and feminist thought in particular.

Having argued that there is a real relationship between work in capitalist society and the creation of standpoint, that the work that farm women do and the value placed upon that work by the larger society leads to farm women's distinct standpoint, and that

to understand this work through the perspective of farm women will facilitate an agrarian feminist theory informed by both standpoint and socialist feminist theories, I turn now to analysis of work. First I look at the existing literature on women and work in general, before considering farm women's work in particular.

3.2 Work

I will divide this review of published literature on work into four types: domestic work, caregiving work, paid work, and volunteer or community work. Introducing themes associated with each work type, I begin with a broad discussion of feminist thought about that type of work. This discussion is not meant to be an exhaustive list of the research that feminists have undertaken on women and work. I have simply provided a few themes, trying to point to some of the major writers in the field. I then show how this translates in the context of farm research, and even more specifically, to the participants in this project. Understanding women's work in a broader framework, as it is similar for both rural and urban women, is essential to developing an appreciation of the more specific problems associated with farm women's work. I follow with a thematic discussion of some of the findings of research conducted with farm women in Canada and internationally. This is necessary as some of these themes do not emerge in the broader research on women and work.

3.2.1 Domestic Work

Statistics show that domestic work is over whelmingly the work of women around the world. A 1995 United Nations study found "that in most developed countries women contributed over thirty hours of housework per week, men only ten to fifteen" (Freedman 131). While women's household work has consistently decreased over time, as women have become more involved in the labour force, men's domestic labour does not seem to be increasing at a significant rate (Blau, Ferber, and Winkler 54). Statistical research done with farm women in Canada, suggests that their situation regarding domestic work corresponds with these broad trends. Cebotarev and Blacklock found that farm women spend in excess of 50 hours per week just in household duties (6), while Pamela Smith estimates that farm men contribute about 10% of the total time devoted to farm housework (Murdoch's, Becker's 167). Consistent with the data on a national level, farm women are responsible for nearly all domestic work.

The work that women do in the house is essential to the success of the family. Ross and Wright point out the importance of household work: "Full-time unpaid domestic workers, almost 99% of whom are women, provide services for the family including cleaning, cooking, shopping, doing laundry, budgeting, managing, and taking care of children" (253).[3] Their comment builds on the classic work of Engels who noted the essential nature and dual character of the reproduction of daily life: "[O]n the one side,

[3]"In 1990, 26.5 million women and 541,000 men made their living by keeping house." (Ross and Wright 254). These are American statistics, but I would expect the situation to be similar in Canada.

the production of the means of existence, of food, clothing and shelter and the tools necessary for that production; on the other side, the production of human beings themselves, the propagation of the species. The social organization under which the people of a particular historical epoch and a particular country live is determined by both kinds of production ..." (71-72).

3.2.1.1 *Invisibility*

While this work is obviously necessary to the continuation of both the family and the capitalist society, the importance of household work is often overlooked both within the family and in society. Many writers discuss the 'invisibility' of women's household work as it relates to the 'reproduction of daily life' (Freedman; Armstrong and Armstrong). Meg Luxton notes that women's work is "unpaid and performed in their family home. It is therefore both private and unseen" (11). It is necessary to 'good' household work that it be invisible. As Luxton and Corman put it, "[o]ne of the prevailing characteristics of housework is that it is only noticeable when it is not done" (163).

The theme of 'invisibility' is also found repeatedly in studies of farm women's work, but this is more generally in regards to the invisibility of their on farm work (Reed et.al.; O'Hara; Wright; Fast and Munro; Ghorayshi; Smith Murdoch's, Beckers). I believe that the tendency to focus on farm women's agricultural work is due to the fact that those doing research with farm women feel compelled to illustrate the fact that women are legitimate farmers. I consider a focus solely on farm women's agricultural work limiting as it results in an underestimation of the value and significance of farm

women's domestic work. I argue that it is essential to recognize the importance of farm women's domestic work. To concentrate solely on farm women's agricultural work ignores the need for systemic change in the social understanding of household work as labour essential to the continuation of the family.

The problems in understanding farm women's domestic work become even more complicated when one considers the close connection between the farm and the household. As Ghorayshi notes: "The farm household is not completely, physically separated from the realm of production. Here, one does not leave the family to go to work. When one is at work, one is, at the same time, in the family. Work time is not easily distinguished from non-work time" (573). As most feminist theories about work focus upon the distinction between public and private one begins to understand the difficulty in using existing theory to conceptualize the position of farm women. For example, taking meals out to the field may be considered domestic work – food preparation – or it may be considered farm work. Julie told a story that I see as a clear example of the blurring of farm and domestic work:

> One spring, I got my chickens in April and we had a blizzard and a long cold spell, we moved 150 chickens to the basement. I carried feed and water down there and carried manure up. I can still remember going to sleep with chickens peeping. We had sick new born calves in the bath tub upstairs, we had newborn piglets in boxes in the house and fed them with an eyedropper. The kids loved all of this as most normal families had real pets. (Julie Green)

When Julie was cleaning up after removing the farm animals from her house, was she involved in farm work or domestic work? The distinction is vague, leaving those attempting to conduct research on either farm women's domestic or agricultural work in

the unique position of attempting to differentiate between the two realms.

While women's household labour is often invisibile, it also suffers a lack of social reward or recognition (Luxton and Corman; Ross and Wright; Rosenberg). As discussed earlier, in a capitalist framework production is rewarded through monetary payment for labour. Duffy, Mandell and Pupo quote a participant in their work who vocalized the repercussions perfectly: "'I feel, without the pay, I have less worth'" (as quoted in Armstrong and Armstrong 89). Because household labour is an unpaid activity in a capitalist world, it receives little social recognition.

3.2.1.2 *Lack of Social Recognition or Reward*

A good deal of literature regarding farm women also discusses the lack of social recognition (O'Hara Partners in Production?; Ghorayshi; Boulding), but this once again is focussed in the area of farm work. On the other hand, the research may only appear to overlook household work, due to the previously discussed vague distinction between household work and farm work. In arguing for recognition for farm women's agricultural work, they may be arguing, at the same time, for recognition of farm women's household work.

In this project, Susan, the participant who was less devoted to the farm and more dedicated to her off farm work, did express frustration that the housework she did was not recognized as essential to the ongoing success of the farm:

> Just because my name isn't on that cheque when they make it out at the [grain] elevator doesn't mean that I didn't have a role in making this. ... Well, I can tell you that when I was raising four kids on the farm and helping out and stuff, it was really kind of a slap in the face that I had no recognition for any of the work that I did. You know, like I says, you look

> after a garden and you take all that stuff in and you can [food preservation] in the fall. You know, you buy peaches by the case and whatever fruit and you can it all and you make these preserves for all winter and you spend hours and hours doing all these kind of things. You know, and, there's no recognition anywhere for that. (Susan Brender)

The need for recognition (and this was not necessarily monetary in form) was so great, that some of the participants in my study vocalized this as one of their principal grievances against government and the larger farm community. I believe that generally the women had already internally recognized the connection between their housework and the ongoing success of the farm – and, thus, they had acknowledged it as something to be valued to the same degree as farm work. Susan clearly states that she understands her work in the house as essential to the farm (food preservation, child rearing), but she also indicates throughout the interview that she does not identify with the identity category 'farmer.' This disconnection will be further explored in Chapter Five.

3.2.1.3 *Isolation*

A third theme in the feminist writings regarding women's household work is the lack of community or social contacts that it allows (Armstrong and Armstrong, 106).[4] The title of Bonnie Fox's book, Hidden in the Household, illustrates this aspect of women's domestic labour. As Luxton puts it, "[h]ousework has not been socialized. Instead, it remains fixed in individual, isolated household units..." (130). Domestic work is predominantly a solitary activity; doing laundry, making beds, and sweeping the floor are all tasks that do not lend themselves to community. These are private activities, with

[4]For an alternative argument see Ross and Wright.

generally only contact with one's own children. Paid labour, on the other hand, demands one to enter a social space and communicate with others. The isolation associated with domestic work is problematic for personal growth.

This problem is exceptionally important to farm women's work as the farm can be an isolating space to begin with (G. Taylor.; N. Taylor).[5] Boulding found the farm women in her American study spending the majority of their time in four work areas: housework, cooking, field and barn chores, and bookkeeping (268). All of these responsibilities are conducted with other family members at best (field and barn chores for example). More often they are done alone. In a study of farm women in Ireland, O'Hara (Partners in Production?) found that many of her participants discussed the necessity of a car in order to overcome issues of dependence and isolation (128-131), but the car is not helpful in easing the isolation necessary to domestic labour. One of the participants in O'Hara's study described the loneliness of domestic work as one of its most unbearable characteristics: "The repetition is the worst and the loneliness in one sense. There is no interaction, it is a solitary thing. There is nothing good about it that I know of" (100).

Isolation emerges as an important theme in the lives of the women interviewed for this thesis. Only one of the participants in this project really described feeling isolated (Julie), but they all expressed the enjoyment of taking part in community activities and

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[5]Langford and Keating (1987) provide an example of a study that claims that farm women do not experience isolation. While I understand their line of reasoning, I would argue that they have taken too limited a definition of 'isolation' in their study.

paid work – both of which provided opportunities for social contact. Susan reminisced about a more community oriented time in farming when women gathered to cook for local weddings and fundraisers. This socialization of generally isolated domestic work really pleased her:

> Well, I think it's great. I think we get together and we can talk things over and see how each one is making out and joke around and have a little bit of fun and get some work done at the same time. (laughs) And I really enjoy those kinds of times! ... And especially in our small farming communities, that kind of thing was kind of like a real community building aspect that we had. Where people got together and they, they shared their ideas and their values with each other. ... It's a real friendship building thing. (Susan Brender)

While Susan discusses this in terms of 'community building,' it seems that she is also looking to alleviate the isolation involved in domestic work. Carolyn discussed working with a neighbour in domestic work: "[I]t's good to have good neighbours on the farm 'cause we used to houseclean together and do lots of things together, which helped." This socialization of domestic work is a theme recurrent in the discussions I had with farm women.

Women's work in the household is undoubtedly necessary to the maintenance and reproduction of the family unit. Despite this fact, it is an activity that remains invisible, unrecognized, and isolating. While this problem is similar for rural and urban women, farm women have a distinct experience of household work. The link between the farm and the home, the geographic isolation, and the lack of recognition of women's work both in the household and on the farm are all factors that combine to make farm women's household work distinctively oppressive.

3.2.2 Caregiving Work

Caregiving work is clearly defined as women's work (Baines, Evans, and Neysmith; Evans; Reitsma-Street). Armstrong and Armstrong note the inverse relationship between women's childbearing and their chances of participating in the labour force: "Each additional child increases the likelihood that mother will stay home. The reverse is the case for fathers" (106). Even when mothers are in the paid labour force, they are most often responsible for taking children to the sitters and use work breaks to shop for children's clothing and household groceries (114-116).[6]

Because caregiving work is often emotional in nature, it is rarely understood as 'real' work. The title of Meg Luxton's book, More Than A Labour of Love: Three Generations of Women's Work in the Home, clearly points this out. While women's

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[6]This finding is echoed in research with women working on tea plantation in Sri Lanka:

> She gets up at around 4:00 a.m. to prepare breakfast and lunch, clean the house and get the children ready for crèche and/or school. ... By 7.00 a.m. the tea pluckers are at work in groups and keep filling their baskets with leaves until the tea break from 9.30 to 10.00 a.m. The lactating mothers visit the crèche to nurse their babies and then resume work until 12.30 or 1.00 p.m. The woman worker takes the load to the weighing shed, visits the crèche, nurses her baby and goes home for the midday meal ... She returns to the field by 2.00 p.m. and continues to pluck leaves until 4.30 p.m. ... She visits the crèche to collect the children and returns home at around 5.30 p.m. She then starts the evening chores: cleaning the house, preparing the evening meal and the next day's midday meal, feeding the children, cleaning them, washing the clothes and putting the children to bed. She is often the last to go to bed at around 10.00 or 10.30 p.m. She sleeps on a sack on the floor as there is usually only one cot in the one-roomed house, which is used by her husband. (Momsen, 162)

I consider many of the activites described in this account to be caregiving work; this caregiving work is a necessary interruption to the Sri Lankan tea pluckers paid work day.

emotional work may be personally rewarding, it entails few social rewards. Luxton and Corman's more recent work clearly expresses the difficulty people have with understanding caregiving as labour: "The demands of caregiving as a labour process are frequently obscured by discourses of romantic love, parental dedication, and family devotion. Caregiving is most clearly understood as work when it involves looking after those who cannot look after themselves - especially children or those who are ill, elderly or have special needs" (186). Luxton and Corman expand the definition of caregiving work to include the support women provide to spouses, extended family, friends, and the communities in which they live.[7] While this work is often personally meaningful for the labourer, it is work all the same. It enables healthy relationships and development. Even if one must look for production in order to understand a concept as work (a position I personally do not support), caregiving work produces healthy and happy people.

Generally farm studies do not define caregiving work as a separate form of work. Rather, it is usually categorized as household work (Martz and Bruekner; O'Hara; Meiners and Olson; Sachs). This is likely due to the close relationship between the farm and the family. Because farm women are often taking care of children while doing their farm work or household work at the same time, it becomes difficult to separate or give women credit for both types of work at the same time.

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[7]The caregiving work that women perform in their communities will be described in a separate section of this thesis. This role represents an integral part of farm women's work and deserves further discussion when focussing on rural women and small communities.

In 2003 I spent six months in Ghana, West Africa, and found the combining of farm work and child care there pervasive.[8] Women carried children on their backs getting fire wood, the children sat by the roadside stands while their mothers worked to sell the farm products, and women were stooped over in cassava fields with a baby nursing. Sharpless provides an example of this from Texas cotton farms of the early 1900's: "As many as two-thirds of mothers, including those who came from town to chop and pick, took their little ones to the fields with them, 'either giving them what care they could themselves or delegating the responsibility to older children.' Mothers who were chopping sometimes tied their children to nearby cotton stalks to keep them from wandering away" (168).

This is not unlike the situation on the farm where I grew up. My mother tells stories of my siblings and I eating dirt in the garden while she dug potatoes some feet away. I remember spending many nights in the grain truck during harvest, sleeping next to my sister on the passenger side floor. The caring work that my mother did was always wrapped up in the work of the farm. Julie described her farm similarly:

> I guess our kids participated in farming whether they liked it or not because they had no choice. They rode in the grain trucks, they came to the barn and helped in the garden. Wherever I went they came until they were in school. ... When I now think back how stressful this had to be for them. I was always after them to hurry up, clean up, eat fast, be quiet, don't mess up" (Julie Green).

While only one of the participants in this study, Carolyn, provided in house care for an aging parent, studies have shown that this is becoming a greater responsibility for

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[8]For gender and development writing regarding this see Momsen.

farm women in Canada. Martz and Bruekner found that: "farm family members must meet increased demands for elder care as medical services have been reduced in rural areas; hospital stays are shorter and in-home care services mean people are remaining in their homes longer. The impact on the family is an increased demand on them to support and assist with the care of the elderly or ill family or friends" (35-36). While only 4% of farm women were providing care for aging or chronically ill family members in 1982, by the year 2002 this had increased to 43% (39). This represents a substantial growth in farm women's responsibilities in caregiving work. With the continued degradation of social programs and health care funding in Canada, this number can only be expected to increase.

3.2.3 Paid Work

Women's contributions to the paid labour force are a subject of much feminist discussion. Women face unfair wages, are often relegated to the lowest status jobs, work seasonally based upon the needs of the family and farm, and are required to work a double-day in order to see to their obligations to the family, the farm, and the community. While paid work can be empowering, socially fulfilling, and economically supportive, it also requires women to work overtime to fulfill all of their roles.

3.2.3.1 *Lower Wages*

Women are generally unfairly compensated for their paid labour force participation. Lowe points out that in 1996 "full-time female employees earned 73 percent of what full-time male employees did" (70). Women are often employed in

underpaid, low-prestige, less skilled jobs (Armstrong and Armstrong 28-41). Christine Riddiough explains that, "because women's primary social role is supposed to be in the family, the work women do outside the home is denigrated and viewed as not as valuable as male labor" (83). This results in lower wages for women's work.

The majority of farm research makes very little of the unfair remuneration offered to farm women. In Winnie Lem's research with farm people in France, she notes that the farm women she talked to were relegated to the low paying positions: "Though women's contributions were often critical to the process of accumulation, mitigating against the possibility of expansion however, was the fact that while women brought in income to the household, they were employed mostly in the lowest paid jobs in the economy. Large amounts of capital were thus not generated through wage employment" (153).

Fast and Munro show the difference in farm men's and women's off farm wages very clearly. Their research found that men worked an average of 860 hours in off farm labour and earned on average $18,500. Farm women, on the other hand, worked an average of 968 hours off the farm annually. While working more hours, farm women only earned an average annual income of $9, 200 - less than half the earnings of their male counterparts (145).

Because most farm women are just happy to have found a job, they do not feel able to complain about pay. The participants in this project never mentioned low pay. They were very happy when they were allowed to work off farm and simply lamented their lack of training, believing that with improved education they could obtain better paying work. The participants' tendency to blame themselves for their lack of

employment opportunities illustrates a need for an increased understanding of patriarchal values that relegate women to these low pay, low status jobs.

3.2.3.2 *Low-Status Jobs*

The low-prestige of certain labour relegates it to the sphere of 'women's work.' These jobs are generally those which are also less skilled, providing a low *quality* of work. Germaine Greer sums up the choices allotted women in the paid labour force:"In most cases women are not offered a genuine alternative to repressive duties and responsibilities: most would happily give up unskilled labor in a factory or the tedium of office work for the more 'natural' tedium of a modern household, because their energies are so thwarted by the usual kinds of female work that they imagine even housework would be a preferable alternative" (57). Armstrong and Armstrong support this theory, finding the majority of women performing jobs including secretary, salesperson, and bookkeeper (55).

Research with farm women shows them employed in these same low prestige jobs. Farm women work in factories, teaching, nursing, clerical work, postal work, housekeeping, waitressing, and as store clerks (van de Vorst; Lem; Sharpless; O'Hara, Out of the Shadows; Westerlind).

Table 3.1: Off-Farm Employment Type

Off-Farm Work Sector	**Male**	**Female**
Agriculture	26%	9%
Health and Social Services	0%	22%
Education	3%	20%
Trades and Manufacturing	19%	2%

(Martz and Bruekner Table 5.1.5)

Those who participated in my research project - all of whom had worked in the paid labour force at one time or another - spoke of work histories in a variety of jobs, including: nurse, waitress, bartender, bank teller, factory worker, and grocery store clerk.

These low status jobs create a personal sense of self-worth for the farm women who must accept these low status positions in order to financially support the farm. The type of work that people take part in creates self-understanding, social perceptions, and familial opinions about that person's importance in the larger picture. When these distinctions are based on gender lines, it also creates a perception of women's importance in a larger framework.

3.2.3.3 *Contingent Work*

Women make up the majority of the contingent or non-standard labour force. This may include part-time work, contract work and temporary work among others. Of the 1991 Canadian part-time workforce 26.2% were female and 8.8% were male. Lowe notes that of the full-time labour force, 39.2% were women, whereas 60.8% were male (38). Deborah Carr argues that these statistics reflect women's choices:

> For many women, contingent work represents a work accommodation that serves their lifestyle and economic needs. Contingent work may fill a woman's desire for a flexible work schedule; may provide a supplemental income at times when one is necessary for married women; and may provide a more convenient option over full-time work" (130).

I am hesitant to accept the notion that contingent work is a choice for women, one that serves their needs. Truly, in Carr's scenario, women's contingent work serves the family needs, not necessarily the needs of the women themselves.

Farm women find themselves necessary labourers in the contingent workforce. Because their work is subject to interruption in regards to farm cycles, child care, domestic work, volunteer work, and a myriad of other responsibilities, farm women do not choose but are relegated to seasonal and part-time work. Julie described how her work was affected by farm cycles: "In 19-- I got a job in a grocery store. I had to leave work during seeding and harvest. My boss was also our friend so this was easy to do. ... I also worked at times in the cafe and local bar which I also enjoyed. My husband did not like me going to work but it gave me independence and I am a people person" (Julie Green). She really enjoyed her time in the paid labour force, but found it difficult to hold down a job because of the demands of the farm operation. This clearly contradicts Carr's suggestion that contingent work fills women's needs for flexibility.

An unstable personal income means that women may feel a distinct lack of independence. Because women's paid labour is subject to the needs of the family, the female labour force is regarded as unstable and unreliable. Women may be required to relinquish their services as required by the family or the farm. This allows justification of the maintenance of women's roles in low status, low waged work.

3.2.3.4 *Double-Day*

Another major topic of discussion regarding women's work in the paid labour force is the 'double-day.' This is the continued requirement of women to arrive home from their paid work to take part in household work. I would describe this as greater than a 'double-day.' Women find themselves involved in much more than domestic duties, but caregiving duties and community work as well.

Speaking with farm women has made it very clear to me that these women hold down many different jobs. In addition to their duties that are similar to those of urban women, farm women perform many tasks related to agriculture and increased amounts of food preservation. These responsibilities persisted regardless of their role in the paid work force.[9]

3.2.4 Volunteer or Community Work

Although not often discussed in feminist texts, women's community and volunteer work is essential to the maintenance of any community. Caring as an aspect of women's work has already been discussed, but this does not just mean familial caring, it also means caring for the community. Caroline Moser illustrated the importance of understanding women's community work as a unique component of women's work, rather than simply an adjunct to women's reproductive labour. She writes:

> The community managing role comprises activities undertaken primarily by women at the community level, as an extension of their reproductive role. This is to ensure the provision and maintenance of scarce resources of collective consumption, such as water, health care and education. It is voluntary unpaid work, undertaken in 'free time.' ... The importance of giving recognition and visibility to this form of work, as an activity in its own right, is of particular significance in the current economic climate where low-income households are increasingly resolving community-level problems through self-help solutions. (34)

Though Moser is looking at women in developing countries, I think that her account speaks to the difficulties faced by farm women in Saskatchewan as well. With the farm

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[9] Research conducted by National Farmers Union (Martz and Bruekner) illustrates this in a more statistical description.

crisis and the lack of resources in rural areas, farm women find themselves doing the community work necessary to fill in the gaps.

In research with farm women the increasing need for women to be active in community activities is often noted (Fast and Munro; Cooper; Meiners and Olson; Bokemeier and Tait). Boulding explains that voluntary work "produces the networks which make up the women's infrastructure of mutual aid so necessary to the survival of any community" (283). In Canada, Ghorayshi further exemplifies the importance of farm women's community work:

> With the decline in the number of farms, the increasing competition and financial pressure facing farmers, the decreasing farm population and the shortage of rural and farm services, networking and organizational activities have gained importance. Lobbying, establishing ties with the larger community, and promoting the interests of the family enterprise are fundamental to the preservation of family farming as a way of life in the midst of the capitalist economy. (578-579)

The many roles women play in regards to work represent competing demands "which complicate efforts to create and maintain friendships, community, or other relationships" (Luxton and Corman 34). Because women are largely responsible for maintaining familial and community ties, they are placed in a position which requires them to balance many activities and responsibilities simultaneously. This juggling act is becoming more and more precarious according to the farm women I interviewed. As Saskatchewan continues to experience a trend of out-migration, especially of young farmers, community work is increasingly placed on the shoulders of fewer and older women. Furthermore, as communities decrease in size, the importance of maintaining ties becomes greater. Jaffe discusses the changes to communities and the social relations

that must evolve with these changes:

> Day-to-day farm work takes place in the context of community - social relations provide much of the invisible web that allows production to take place. Rural communities, in turn, derive much of their character from the farm work done here. Simply put, rural communities live or die according to the health of the farms that are attached to them, and farms cannot survive without healthy communities" (4-5).

Statistically, farm women's volunteer work has been shown to be declining. Martz and Bruekner's Canadian study found that 40% of respondents noted a decline in their volunteer work (116). The reasons for decreasing volunteer work included: children of age or grown up (24%), less or no time (17%) and off farm work takes up spare time (7%) (116).[10]

This study largely echoed these results. As the average age of farmers is older, farm people spend less time in the community. Many of the participants said that they spent more time on community work when their children were in school. Susan notes the increase in off farm work as a major factor in the noticeable decline in community involvement:

> [W]e used to go and prepare for fall supper in our church and we would have about 70 or 80 women there making perogies and cabbage rolls and getting the things ready for the supper the next day. And, now we go there and we get 30 or 40 women and that's tops. And a lot of those women are in their sixties, seventies and eighties. And there's very few young women there and it's because the young women aren't staying on the farm, they're moving, young families are moving because you can't make a living off the farm. And, also, the women that are here, the younger women that are married to farmers most of them have off-farm jobs, and if you're going to

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[10]This study noted that this community work is falling on the shoulders of farm youth, noting a 73% increase in volunteer activities by farm children between the ages of 13 and 15 (118).

> do something like this on a weekend they want to spend their weekend time with their families. They don't want to be going out and doing another job on the weekends. You know, with the community. It's just like I said, you prioritize. And that's what ... you can't, you can't fault them for it at all. I mean it's going to be a great loss to our communities, but every person has to make their choices, like I said, I made my choices. And each one of us has to make our own. (Susan Brender)

Susan describes the lack of choices that farm women face. They care about their communities, but the double and triple work days leave them with few options – they have to sacrifice something and that is usually volunteer community work.

Having reviewed the literature related to farm women's work, the next chapter provides a sketch of the research setting. In Chapter Four I present a short discussion of the historical, financial, and social situation of Saskatchewan farm people. Beyond the statistics and the evening news, there is a larger framework in which Saskatchewan farming takes place. I hope that the next chapter can help the reader to understand the bigger picture of farming in that province.

Chapter 4:

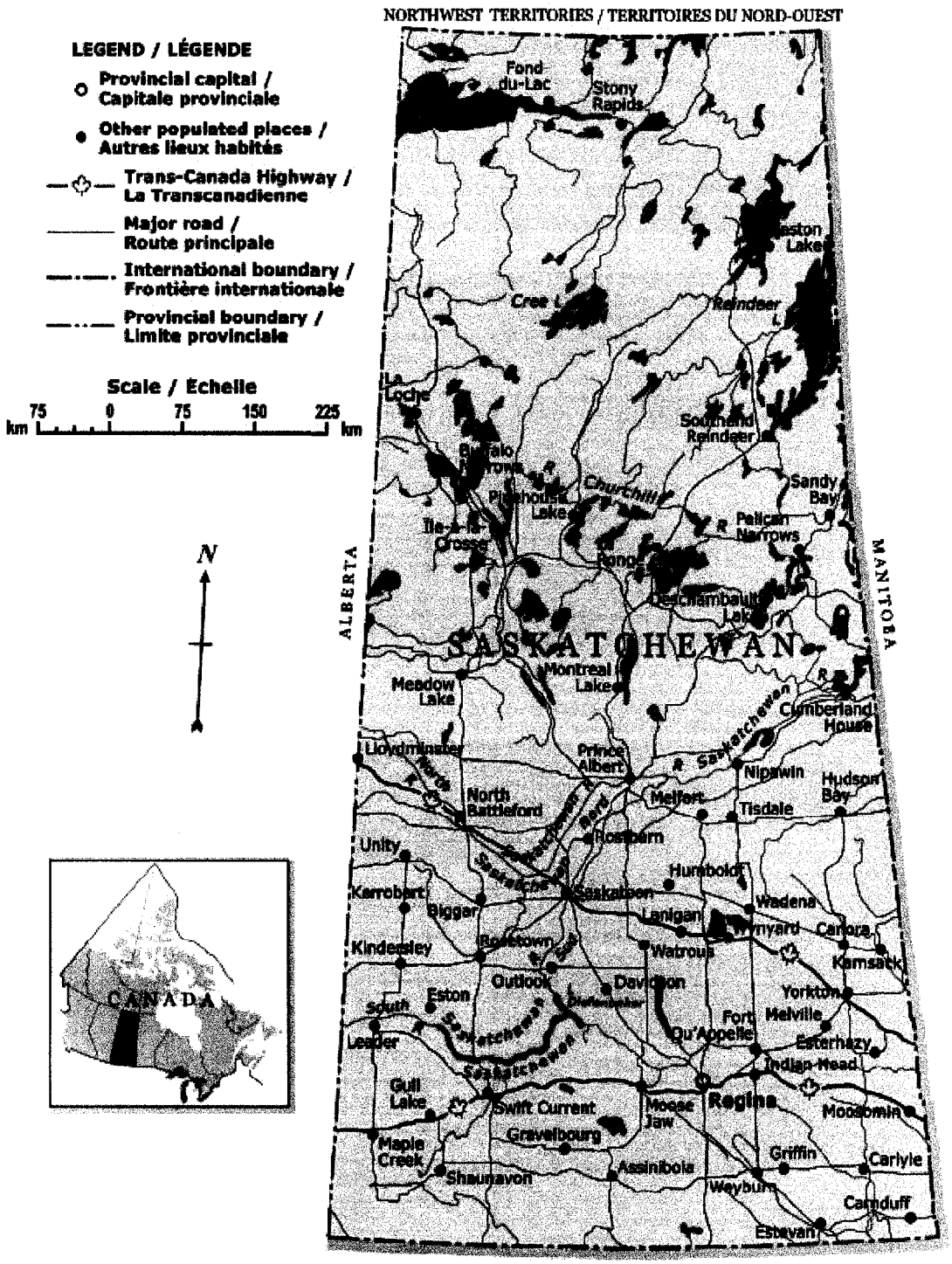
Farming in Saskatchewan

> The knowing subject is always located in a particular spatial and temporal site, a particular configuration of the everyday / everynight world. Inquiry is directed towards exploring and explicating what s/he does not know - the social relations and organizaton pervading her or his world but invisible in it. (D. Smith, Writing the Social 5)

It is important for the reader to understand the state of agriculture in Saskatchewan at the time of this study. Furthermore, it is important to more fully understand the geographic area in which this research was conducted. This examination is crucial in locating the participants within a larger framework.

I will begin by discussing the history of Saskatchewan as a farming province: who settled the province, what was farming like then, how did agriculture develop? I will then put forth a statistical picture, as discussed in Statistics Canada and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada documents, of farming in Saskatchewan. Next, I look to the ongoing farm crisis as a factor in understanding the current situation of agriculture - the space in which I spoke with participants. Here I will also demonstrate a continuing ideological shift, from agri*culture* to agri*business*, currently taking place in the farm world. Finally, I briefly outline the position of women in Canadian agriculture at present.

Figure 4.1: Map of Saskatchewan (Natural Resources Canada, 2001)



4.1 History of Farming in Saskatchewan

> [T]he history of the development of agriculture in Saskatchewan is a history neither of giants nor of rugged individualism, but rather of ordinary farm people working together to achieve common goals. (Archer 149)

Reading the history of Saskatchewan it would seem that we should have known long ago that farming would not be a profitable venture on this land. When the Hudson's Bay Company sent Captain John Palliser to explore the region in the late 1850s, he described the province as "an extension of the great American desert" (Regehr 9). The province had little to recommend itself.

To begin with the settlers had to contend with the harsh weather conditions of the province: "The lack and unpredictability of rainfall subjected the old native hunters, the up-country fur traders and the agricultural settlers in search of the promised land to the vagaries and caprice of nature" (Regehr 9). When not dealing with problems of drought, there was always the frigid winters to worry about. Saskatchewan has a very short frost-free growing season, not conducive to the business of farming. As Regehr notes, Saskatchewan "farmers can count on only one hundred and twenty to one hundred and thirty-five consecutive, frost-free days in the year" (10). The original variety of wheat grown in the province, Red Fife, required almost exactly one hundred and twenty days to ripen; frost damage was a widespread problem for early settlers.

If settlers found means to contend with the weather they then had to deal with the fact that the terrain was completely unforgiving. As Regehr notes: "The first agricultural settlers who moved into western Canada ... were immediately and continuously confronted with serious transportation problems. ... Necessary supplies, equipment and

livestock could only be brought to the settlement with great exertion and expense, while exports of crops grown or livestock raised in the fledgling colony could only be taken to market with similar effort and expense" (9). Still, in the late 1800s and early 1900s Sifton, a Liberal MLA in Manitoba, expended great energy in encouraging settlers to come to the province. With an extensive advertising campaign and improvements to the homesteading procedure, Sifton managed to lure many foreigners to the harsh land of Saskatchewan. Hungarians, Germans, and Russian Doukhobors arrived in great numbers to both farm and set up small businesses (Archer 149-152).

The last to settle were the Ukrainians, and it is this group that came to the south central portion of the province - the area in which my study takes place. The Ukrainian immigrants experienced severe hardship in their first years of settlement. Archer illustrates the problems faced by the Ukrainian people upon arrival in Saskatchewan:

> Used to hard work, hardy and experienced agriculturalists, they underwent much hardship and poverty before they gained a measure of self-sufficiency. The reality was so different from the Canada depicted in promises given. Perhaps more than any immigrant group they suffered exploitation by confidence men in Europe and in Canada. In fact, only the exceptional Ukrainian managed to avoid poverty in Canada. ...These were the 'stalwart peasants' referred to by Sifton as good quality, and they proved him right. In the late 1890s and early 1900s they poured into the Northwest by the thousands to settle north of Yorkton and west in a broad area along the park belt. They came as poor, persecuted, illiterate stock seeking free land and an opportunity to pioneer in peace. They were not afraid to work, and, as one put it, 'bitter and unenviable were our beginnings, but by hard work and with God's help, we gradually got established.' (117-118)

In the east central portion of Saskatchewan there is still a considerable population of Ukrainian people. According to the Ukrainian Canadian Congress Saskatchewan

Provincial Council, in 2001 there were 121, 740 Ukrainians in the province, the majority of them in the Parkland Belt - the area of this study (Immigration and Settlement Patterns). This is the area in which I was raised and, while not of Ukrainian ancestry, I learned the traditions and culture of the Ukrainian people. I have quoted Archer at length as I believe that he captures the spirit of the Ukrainian people; he conveys an ethic of hard work and resiliency that seems to have been transferred to the general population of farmers in Southern Saskatchewan. Regehr describes the province as "next year country" (9), a term that is appropriate in the hardy attitudes of the farming population of Southern Saskatchewan.

The immigrants coming to Saskatchewan, no matter what their home country, were all looking for the same thing: a nice plot of land given to them for free by the Canadian government. While the homesteading act had been improved by Sifton, it would not apply to anyone who wanted such a plot of farm land in Saskatchewan. The hopeful young female farmer would not find a welcome in the new homesteading act. Jackel writes: "Section 9 of the Dominion Lands Act provided that 'every person who is the sole head of a family' could apply to take up one hundred and sixty acres of homestead land in the surveyed portions of the west, subject to the usual conditions of entry fee, residence, and improvements. Furthermore, any male eighteen years of age or over was similarly entitled to apply" (xxi). And so farming was established as an occupation reserved for men.

The women in the Canadian frontier were not going to take this situation without a fight and many began writing letters to politicians, newspapers, and some even travelled

to Ottawa to fight for their right to farm (Jackel). Georgina Binnie-Clark, a farmer in Saskatchewan, was fighting for her own rights as well as the rights of other female farmers when she travelled to Ottawa as early as 1908. She had come from England to farm in Saskatchewan and felt the brunt of sexist attitudes in her early attempts to make her farm profitable. On her travels to Ottawa she met other female farmers and noted that: "'Canadian women had already taken up the matter of Homesteads for Women with a deep sense of the injustice of a law which, whilst seeking to secure the prosperity of the country in enriching the stranger, ignores the claim of the sex which bore the brunt of the battle in those early and difficult days when every inch of our great wheat-garden of the North-West had to be won with courage and held with endurance.'" (as quoted in Jackel, xxiii). According to Frank Oliver, Minister of the Interior in 1910, the problem was that giving homesteads to women would immediately negate the purpose of the homesteading act: "the object in giving homestead is to make the land productive, and this would not be the case if held by women" (Jackel, xxvi). The homesteads for women struggle continued without avail until 1929; at this point homesteads were no longer given away and the government then invited women to feel free to buy a farm - a freedom they had always possessed.

If women were not treated fairly in the early years of Saskatchewan, racism was an even bigger problem. The First Nations peoples of Saskatchewan suffered greatly as the Hudson's Bay Company worked to explore the province. Even when Palliser visited the province, before settlement had begun, he noted that the native peoples of the province were suffering from the excessive hunting undertaken by the Hudson's Bay

Company. Described by Regehr it would seem that the destruction of the First Nations peoples was simply a matter of fate: "Disease and pestilence of unprecedented magnitude carried off as many as half the members of many bands and tribes in the 1860s and 1870s. Then, only a few years later, the buffalo, the mainstay of Indian life on the plains, disappeared with shocking suddenness" (16). The First Nations population would continue to decline through the early 1900s, but more importantly their unique cultures would continue to be devastated by the continued growth of Euro-Canadian civilization (Pitsula 351-360).

While the First Nations people were pushed off their land, the Europeans continued to settle the plains of Saskatchewan. In the early 1900s, Saskatchewan farmers began to embrace the need for greater technology in farming methods. If farmers were to get the seed in the ground and harvests from the fields before winter came they had to find a way to make the operation more efficient. Steam tractors and threshing machines were popular with the farmers, but generally they were prohibitively expensive. As farmers worked co-operatively to complete the harvest, the belief that farming was a viable - if not righteous - way to live was inured in the population (Archer 152).

On September 1, 1905 Saskatchewan became a province of Canada. The Saskatchewan Act gave the province authority over all legal matters in the province, but the federal government retained control of all natural resources, immigration, and railway lands. Despite these limitations, the people of Saskatchewan celebrated their newly acquired status. Considering the problems the fledgling province was accountable for, the leaders were in for a challenge. With no money for education and serious problems in

establishing reliable health care facilities, the province struggled to create a viable provincial population in the Canadian frontier. Between the terrible winter of 1906 when nearly all cattle and sheep in the province died of starvation or exposure and the political unease of those first years, it is inspiring to see that the people of the province were always active in ensuring that their province remained a viable and important player in Canadian agricultural and social development (Archer 219).

If the province somehow pulled through all of the early problems of establishing itself, it faced its greatest challenge in the 1930s. Archer writes:

> The 1930s as a decade had a greater impact on Saskatchewan's people than on any other. It shaped and changed lives. In much of Canada the 1930s was the Depression, but in Saskatchewan it was the 'Dirty Thirties.' All the problems of drought, insect pests, erosion, low prices for produce, and high winds occurred simultaneously, and continued year after year after year. (226).

Progress made in the early years was lost as livestock died and the fields blew away. With the worst of the Dirty Thirties being experienced in the most southern parts of Saskatchewan, the government attempted to resettle farmers more centrally in the province - moving many families to the parkland region (north of Yorkton, Figure 1) the area in which I conducted this research. Archer continues:

> Constant wind, dust and drought made life in some areas of the triangle [the southern area of Saskatchewan] unbearable and families loaded their goods and chattels, chickens and pigs, and, driving what livestock could travel, trekked north to the park belt where there were patches of green, some hope of water, firewood, and the possibilities of a vegetable garden. But most of the good farming land had been taken up in the 1920s or earlier, hence the weary trekkers found themselves on marginal land, back to the hard grind of pioneering again with inadequate machinery, lack of money, and few prospects beyond the immediate task of providing shelter, fuel, food and clothing for the family. Most of these late pioneers were

> forced to apply for, and accept, seed and relief food until a crop could be planted and a trickle of income assured. (226)

Between 'black blizzards' (dust storms) and grasshoppers the spirit of the settlers was more than tested. The urban populations rioted over a government that would allow its people to go hungry while they were willing to work and farmers began to understand that hard work would not make the Depression end. Those that had left the province in the early 1930s must have felt blessed as the decade went on. Archer comments:

> Nature warred with man's puny efforts. Drought was severe in 1935 in western Saskatchewan but rain came in the south and the east. Hopes were blighted as stem rust made a mockery of early promise, causing a loss to farmers estimated at nearly one hundred million dollars. The average yield in 1936 was only 7 1/2 bushels per acre for wheat due to extremely high temperatures and little rain. Surely this was the nadir but 1937 brought the worst. That year of drought, dust, heat and grasshoppers will be remembered as the most complete crop failure ever experienced. The wheat yield averaged 2.7 bushels per acre and the drought extended deep into the park belt. An infestation of army worms and an epidemic of encephalomyelitis added to the miseries of the worst year yet. (240)

Just when all hope seemed to be lost, the farmers of Saskatchewan were saved by a combination of the Second World War and some more favourable weather. Farmers in the province began to diversify at a rapid rate. The war called for oats, barley, and flax, but Saskatchewan's greatest contribution came in the form of livestock and animal products. In fact, Saskatchewan's production and contributions to the war effort attracted great attention: "It stimulated interest in abattoirs, creameries and cheese factories, and markedly affected the pattern of agricultural production" (Arche, 250-251). The agricultural community was back on stable ground after a decade of relentless suffering.

This new stability did not mean that the farming community of the province forgot the sting of the Dirty Thirties. Farmers were coming back from a time of extreme hardship and in order to secure their futures, they reacted politically. After an exciting and fierce campaign, 1944 saw the election of a socialist government in Saskatchewan. The Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), under the leadership of Thomas C. Douglas, promised change for the Saskatchewan farmer and business person, it promised "social security legislation, economic planning, labor legislation, and guaranteed minimum prices for farm products" (Lipset 152). The people of Saskatchewan were looking ahead; they never wanted to see a time like the '30s again. In his groundbreaking work on the CCF Lipset notes: "The end of the depression gave many workers and farmers the economic and psychological security to begin to think in long range terms rather than in immediate, personal ones, and therefore the CCF program of postwar reforms to prevent a new depression could receive support" (151).

The CCF promised change and they immediately went to work revolutionizing Saskatchewan both economically and socially. The Trade Union Act of 1944 allowed for union organization of workers, while the Farm Security Act of the same year allowed farmers economic security and a guaranteed price for their products. The CCF placed emphasis on free, quality education for both rural and urban children, while the new government also began attempts to develop the natural resources of Saskatchewan. While all of this change meant an exciting time in Saskatchewan history, it also proved to be lacking in planning. Archer notes:

> The flurry of activity during the first year of office showed that the governmental system which had evolved in Saskatchewan to that time was not able to accommodate the proliferation of new agencies. Cabinet ministers were too busy to give detailed study to each innovation. Treasury personnel were not in a position to control and monitor expansion within established departments or within new agencies. The legislature itself provided no ready vehicle for scrutinizing crown corporations. Douglas had promised a planned development. (274)

Government commercial ventures were set up without research being conducted; within a matter of years the CCF had set up and shut down a wool mill and a shoe factory at considerable expense to the province (Archer 272-276).

By the election of 1948 CCF support had faltered greatly and Tommy Douglas knew that he had some work to do (Archer 276). As Douglas and his CCF party moved their leftist politics closer to center, they regained their popularity and remained at the helm through the election of 1952. Tommy Douglas did make some mistakes, but to this day the man is a hero in Saskatchewan history. He led exploration of the northern natural resources, he brought electricity to the rural areas, and he set up province wide health care facilities. By the 50th anniversary of confederation, in 1955, the province was at a high point in its history (Archer 289).

Tommy Douglas continued to lead the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation to victory in the 1960 election despite many controversial decisions and commitments. One of the most significant decisions made by Douglas before this election was his resolution to force the right to vote on the First Nations peoples of Saskatchewan. The majority of the First Nations firmly rejected the idea of voting in provincial elections. They worried that gaining the vote would cause them to lose their treaty rights and force them to leave

the reserves and compete with the Europeans to earn a living. Notwithstanding a 1958 promise to not grant the vote to the Indian people without their consent, Tommy Douglas announced that the First Nations would receive the provincial franchise in 1960 (Pitsula 355-357).

Despite angering the First Nations, Tommy Douglas set off to campaign for the provincial leadership. Campaigning primarily on the introduction of a socialised medical system, Medicare, Douglas fought through the election, once again winning leadership of the province. Even though Douglas, a most charismatic leader, left the CCF in 1961, the party was finally able to push Medicare through the government in 1962. While these great changes had been made, the CCF proved unable to maintain the leadership of the province without Douglas, and in 1964 the Liberals finally ousted the long running socialist government (Praud and McQuarrie 149).

Where Tommy Douglas and the CCF worked relentlessly for the farm population of Saskatchewan, many farmers felt that the Liberals left them in the dust. Working to increase production in other areas, namely potash and pulp mills, the Liberals cut social spending and formed new taxes in order to balance the budget (Haverstock 208). While the decline in incomes for farm people could be blamed on Liberal policies, there were also significant changes to the systems of global capitalism. Between the constant ups and downs in the price of wheat, the unpredictable weather, and the volatile international marketplace, farming became higher risk than ever before. The 1970s marked the beginning of this high risk farming, and the beginning of the on-going and oft discussed 'farm crisis' (Stirling 324-325).

4.2 The Farm Crisis

Canadian agriculture is currently in a state of restructuring. Large financial losses have led farmers and government to re-examine the ways in which production is conceived. This restructuring represents an ideological move from small-scale, family, farming to a more industrial, agri-business, type of farming. I identify three of the major developments or occurrences that have provided the impetus for the current restructuring of agricultural production: the boom and bust of the 1970s and 1980s, international trade wars, and the increasingly globalized marketplace. Examining each of these may provide a clearer picture of the motivations for the industrialization of agriculture.

4.2.1 Boom and Bust

Farming has always been a gamble. Forces beyond the control of individual farmers - weather and insects for example - often determine production and the value of that produce. While the industry is unstable, sometimes farmers do get a lucky roll of the dice. This happened in the mid-1970s. Uncontrollable factors destroyed production in the competitive grain markets of Australia, the Soviet Union, and China, while in Canada the weather was beautiful and the grasshoppers were quiet. Between Canada and the U.S., the market for grain products was cornered. Canada, a country with a history of surplus food stocks, could not produce enough food to fill the markets. The government had sold all surplus stocks and began encouraging farmers to produce at greater rates. In order to finance the means for greater production, the government introduced the Farm Credit Corporation (FCC). The FCC would provide low interest loans to farmers so that

they could buy more machinery and land, thus increasing production.

Some farmers used this money to improve their lifestyles in ways that they would never dream of now. Participants in this project mentioned building new homes in the early 1980's. Julie had a family of six living in a two bedroom house and Susan's family was living in town and travelling to the farm before the boom of the late 1970s. Susan discussed the positive nature of this time in agriculture: "In the '80s income [from the farm] was better and it was a time when we had some savings that we had accumulated you know from the late '70s and early '80s and we could afford to build a house at that time. ... You know if we were in the same situation now we wouldn't be moving" (Susan Brender).

The government and farmers saw no end to this international need for food products. Unfortunately for Canadian farmers the end came in the mid-80s. Grain prices went into a steep decline for multitude of reasons, not the least of which was a response to the U.S. 1985 Farm Bill which changed their 'loan rates.' These loan rates functioned as floor prices, so any fluctuation there was reflected in rates for most farmers.

Now farmers had machinery and land to spare, but few markets in which to sell their product. Farmers also had staggering debts. Farmers were left with only one option: grow more produce, more competitively in order to pay off loans. The need to increase production led to the use of more farm chemicals, expensive genetically modified seeds, and larger machinery (see Table 1 for the increasing costs of farm inputs). Farmers created debt that even today, twenty years later, they continue to work to escape (for further discussion of this see: Qualman,; Lind; van de Vorst; Wilson).

4.2.2 International Trade Wars

A second motivation for the industrialization of agriculture is an ongoing trade war between the U.S. and European grain markets. This trade war provides the means for low grain prices. These price wars push grain prices down as other governments attempt to make their grain prices competitive. Governments not willing or able to take a loss on the farmer's side see results in bankruptcies and farm foreclosures. Canada is one such country (Australia is another example) and the trade wars have led to governmental preference for larger, more efficient farming - industrial agriculture[1] (for further discussion of this episode see: Lawrence, Knuttila, and Gray; Wilson).

4.2.3 Globalization

This discussion of international trade wars brings us naturally to a discussion of the third motivating factor in the industrialization of agriculture - globalization. In an increasingly boundary-less world, production and marketing must become more and more efficient and cost effective. The current family farm is seen as 'inefficient' in our globalized world. Ralph Ashmead, a farm finance and policy consultant, questions the utility of the family farm in a globalized world: "'Does it really make sense that one person will still be the tractor driver, the accountant, the company credit specialist and marketer? I don't think that's possible and still do a good job. The world has become too complex for that and governments will soon have to come to grips with that'" (as quoted

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[1]It is important to note that researchers have found agribusiness operations to be far less efficient than small family farms or organic farms (Kimbrell).

in Wilson 88). Ashmead points out what appears to be obvious - the economy, the global market, demands the industrialization of agriculture. Susan Machum states the case clearly: "farm families are going to be facing more and more pressures to 'restructure' the ways that they farm and sell produce, as we move into a more global economy" (83). If corporations must become leaner in order to compete in the globalized world, so must agriculture.[2]

These three factors, the fall out from the prosperous farming of the late 1970s, international trade wars, and globalization, present a very stressful situation for Saskatchewan farm women today. Farm women live in households plagued by debt. Where the family used to be able to control the farming methods, they are now required to hand that control over to large seed and chemical companies and government sales organizations.[3] While doing all of this they face a government which tells them that they

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[2]Anthony Winson and Belinda Leach have conducted a relevant study regarding globalization and its effects on three rural communities in southern Ontario.

[3]I think it is important here to really understand the effects of industrialization on the agricultural community. Dr. Joann Jaffe discusses this loss of control as it changes the nature of farm people's work. Using a term coined by Braverman, she refers to her understanding as the 'deskilling hypothesis': "This critique builds on the Marxist concept of alienation, a concept that refers to the process of dehumanization resulting from the loss of creativity and control over one's labour under capitalism. In spite of its name, Braverman's concept of deskilling is less about losing the knowledge of how to do some particular kind of task than it is about the degradation of the quality of work and loss of control over the labour process" (6).

As farmers become used to using newer technologies in farming, they lose control of most aspects of the farming operation. For example, to grow the highest yielding canola the farmer has to first buy the seed from a company such as Monsanto. She then plants it. The farmer then must buy the chemicals approved for that seed and spray the field. Finally, when the crop is ready it is harvested. The harvest is then sold for a price set by the market. As farming takes on this operation type we can see a complete

must continue to grow in size if they want to compete. Attempting to grow while struggling with intense debt, the farm is a place of stress in a state of perpetual crisis. Julie told a story of near farm foreclosure that really brings home an understanding of the circumstances under which farm people live:

> We almost lost our farm. We rented 3/4s of land from [a relative]. We seeded it, sprayed it, and combined it. We bought a newer, bigger combine to enable us to farm an extra 3/4. We had no written agreement and we hauled the grain to the bin on [the relative's] farm. [The relative] put locks on the bins and we couldn't haul the grain out, [the relative] hauled it all out and we were out all the expenses plus we now had a combine payment. (Julie Green)

Clearly the financial problems on the farm can lead to competition even within the farm family itself. When outside pressures from creditors are combined with these internal conflicts the pressure can be too much. Julie went on to discuss the stress of dealing with government agencies designed to help in this time of crisis:

> Farm Credit was hounding us as we couldn't make our payment. We went to the farm debt review board and we were assigned a mediator from a farm about 40 miles from us. We attended a meeting in Regina with a panel of people. Our mediator was there and helped explain the situation. This was the first time in our lives we were late with a land payment. We had borrowed $120,000 to buy the two quarters from [a relative]. We bought this for $80,000 the rest we used for one combine payment and built the house. We had $60,000 paid back and the panel accused us of being lazy. They had no compassion at all. My feeling when I left that meeting was defeat. I remember wishing instead of picking stones by hand, burning brush piles and then cleaning them up by hand all summer, instead I should have taken a holiday as they had suggested we did. I was very angry that these people could sit there in three piece suits and judge us. Indicate we were lazy people. (Julie Green)

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deskilling of the work that previously required ingenuity and a more personal involvement.

While the government had set up programs to lend money to farmers, help them grow, and perhaps provide some better standards of living, they clearly left this farm family in a precarious position when the farm ran into troubles. The urban government workers could not understand the family conflict and the personal struggles of the family farm. Julie and her husband ended up turning to the private banking system to gain control of their farm debt; it was the only way to escape the pressures of the government pressure to pay back loans given so easily. Julie continues:

> After many meetings with our mediator we settled with Farm Credit, borrowed $80,000 and paid them off. Our mediator told us if we could borrow this money from a bank, tell the bank we went through the Farm Debt Review Board, then we could pay off this debt. After visiting three banks, telling them the truth, and getting turned down, we went to the fourth bank, never told them about the Farm Debt Review Board, and we got the loan. Now tell me where is the justice. The Farm Credit Corporation was for farmers. HOW IRONIC. Now farm credit owns a lot of land from people who trusted them and were less fortunate than us. We are still paying off this debt today. We did pay for our combine, traded it off and two years ago we bought newer, bigger which of course we are still paying off. I see no light at the end of the tunnel. (Julie Green)

To live under the constant stress of existing debt, the necessity to continue acquiring additional loans, and the urban myth of the rich, but lazy farmer is almost too much to imagine.

To add to these struggles is a general ideological shift in Canadian social policy. Socially and politically Canada is a place that seems to be experiencing a tangible move toward an individualistic understanding in which social problems are more often viewed as individual inadequacies that could be overcome if one would work harder. Morrow et. al. argue: "In the Canadian context ... the course of policy continues to divest from a

collectivist 'rights oriented' society where the state has some responsibility towards its citizens, to an individualist 'responsibility obsessed duty state' where social problems are seen as personal failures. The result is two-fold. Increased emphasis on private solutions to social problems and, in the process, increasingly 'fiscalized' social policy where financial considerations trump all others" (360). Seen throughout Canada, the dismantling of the welfare state illustrates a strong shift in social values. The effects of this change on the farming community are significant.[4]

4.3 The Ideological Nature of the Restructuring of Agriculture

In order to facilitate the current move to industrialization governments recognized that they would have to create a shift in the current principles of consumers and farmers

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[4] Michael Rushton's article, "Economics, Equity and Urban-Rural Transfers," is important in that he considers government's responsibility to rural and urban spending purely from an economic standpoint. He argues that it would simply not be economically responsible for the government to continue subsidizing farmers. Rural out-migration, according to Rushton, should not be stopped, but should be allowed to continue in response to the market. Bruno Jean, on the other hand, asks the reader to consider rural out-migration as a factor that will affect the country beyond the terms of economics. One must take a broader approach to the effects of out-migration of rural peoples: "An effective rural development policy must be based on the recognition that rural regions are multifunctional in nature, which demands a difficult yet essential balancing of the economic, ecological and social aspects of any development strategy" (160). On another level, Roger Gibbins argues that the debate regarding the social importance of the rural West may be unnecessary as rural society is becoming less distinct with increased use of internet technology and greater access to other urban medias. If subsidizing rural spaces does not make sense economically or socially we are left to consider the environmental importance of rural communities. Does this function of the rural community alone make it worthy of continued subsidization and program implementation? Discussions regarding the relevance of the rural West are on-going and often heated. Considering the many angles of this debate it is an important area for further research.

alike. The ideologies of the family farm stand in binary opposition to those of industrialization: rural ideology vs. market ideology. Each of these doctrines will be examined in order to see the gradual shift in the philosophy of the larger population.[5]

Let us begin with the weakening of, what Barry Wilson calls, the "rural ideology" (82-87). This has also been termed the "moral economy" (Lind 49-60) and may be linked to the "Rhine model" (Sennett 53-54). Rural ideology asserts the importance of the family farm as a social and economic institution. Like the Rhine model, the discourse of rural ideology "emphasizes certain obligations of economic institutions to the polity" (Sennett 53). In this case, the polity is the community of family farmers. Rural ideology calls for government to intervene, in order to make family farming an economically viable option. As Epp and Whitson point out, this approach "would require our elected governments to weigh the demands of 'the economy' - which essentially are demands for greater profits - against other definitions of the public good" (xxxiii). Governments must recognize that the rural populace is valuable to Canada in ways other than economic. Communities and people must be supported as the loss of the rural society means a loss of an important part of the Canadian identity and ideology.

In opposition to this approach is the free market philosophy, also known as the "leave it to the market" approach (Lowe 6). Those leaning towards the ideology of the free market assert that one must be competitive or leave. If industrial agriculture is more efficient it must, obviously, be the only option for Canadian competition in global

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[5]For a significant link to the fisheries crisis see: Cadigan.

markets. Market ideology would argue that subsidization of family farms only "distorts market signals" (Wilson 93). While ignoring the social implications of this statement, market defenders encourage family farmers to 'get big or get out.' They also encourage Canadian government to examine foreign markets as a possible source of cheaper food products that are currently produced here at higher cost. The economists argue for more open borders and more efficient farms. Let the market rule and farmers will sink or learn to swim.

These diametrically opposing views have been in competition for years, but in our increasingly globalized world the scales have begun to tip in favour of the market. This has facilitated an emphasis on profit and efficiency over people and social relations. This situation presents tenuous ground for farm women.

4.4 The Statistical Portrait of Farming in Saskatchewan

The farm crisis has been especially significant in Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan soil is particularly well suited to the growth of grain and oilseeds, a market currently in a state of emergency. Because of the industrialization of agriculture grain farmers have, out of necessity, begun to increase the use of high priced fertilizers and chemicals. As Lawrence, Knuttila and Gray note, "the best [farmers] can do is to produce more output per input of labour - largely by utilizing new technology - or by increasing the scale of their operations" (91). The grain farming industry, thus, requires high cost input (See Operating Expenses, Table 4.1).

Table 1 shows the financial difficulties experienced by Saskatchewan farmers. Farm revenues increase, but at the same time expenses intensify as farmers attempt to be more productive. Because increases in revenues cannot compete with the rising costs of farming, incomes deteriorate. To make matters worse, the government forecasted a net income of only $13,700 for Saskatchewan farmers in 2002. This "represents a decline of 69% from the previous year and is well below the recent 5-year average" (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Farm Income 21).

All of the participants in this project discussed the stress of low, unreliable farm incomes. Carolyn said: "Well, the thing is, you hope that in the spring when you seed that it'll come out good, but it's always something goes wrong. You know it's a big gamble. Like, if it doesn't rain in time, you know, the crop doesn't fill out and you don't get what you hoped for. Then it's just survival" (Carolyn Wood). Living under these tenuous circumstances every day results in immense pressure on the farm family and researchers have noted a "marked increase in depression, suicides, family breakdown, alcoholism, and family violence" (Kubik 108).

Table 4.1: Average Farm Revenues, Expenses, and Income Across Canada 1998-2000[6]

Province	1998	1999	2000 (preliminary)
P.E.I.			
Farm Revenues	210,394	238,330	251,657
Operating Expenses	181,510	201,440	217,927
Net Cash Income	28,893	36,890	33,730
New Brunswick			
Farm Revenues	188,595	208,656	225,452
Operating Expenses	160,949	174,216	194,186
Net Cash Income	27,646	34,441	31,266
Quebec			
Farm Revenues	186,887	204,388	223,738
Operating Expenses	154,314	168,785	185,807
Net Cash Income	32,573	35,603	37,931
Ontario			
Farm Revenues	167,289	177,095	189,383
Operating Expenses	143,550	153,106	163,517
Net Cash Income	23,738	23,989	25,866
Manitoba			
Farm Revenues	152,531	157,410	154,274
Operating Expenses	130,456	136,143	133,318
Net Cash Income	22,075	21,267	20,956
Saskatchewan			
Farm Revenues	**104,762**	**103,508**	**108,731**
Operating Expenses	**82,794**	**86,287**	**89,772**
Net Cash Income	**21,968**	**17,221**	**18,959**
Alberta			
Farm Revenues	165,637	176,090	194,584
Operating Expenses	143,796	155,689	171,950
Net Cash Income	21,841	20,401	22,634
British Columbia			
Farm Revenues	201,765	203,877	217,023
Operating Expenses	183,153	182,964	192,152
Net Cash Income	18,612	20,912	24,871

Source: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Farm Income Table A.11[7]

[6] All statistics reflect those most recently available at the time of study.

[7]Farm revenues, in this case, represent revenues from any farm-related area, including government subsidies, but apart from any off-farm income. Operating

Table 4.2: Farm Bankruptcies 1987-2001

	NL	PEI	NS	NB	QU	ON	MB	SK	AB	BC
1987	0	2	5	2	67	52	47	**85**	71	23
1988	1	0	4	4	54	35	27	**115**	54	31
1989	0	2	0	3	61	18	26	**152**	58	14
1990	2	5	4	7	73	32	15	**189**	62	18
1991	0	3	3	7	82	15	21	**224**	71	15
1992	0	2	5	3	63	21	15	**191**	73	10
1993	1	7	4	2	49	22	13	**166**	80	5
1994	0	3	2	3	67	15	7	**132**	68	11
1995	1	0	8	5	33	23	10	**94**	87	12
1996	0	0	5	4	54	17	24	**95**	75	1
1997	0	4	6	4	54	15	19	**76**	61	4
1998	0	1	4	1	47	12	27	**92**	55	5
1999	0	1	2	2	42	17	29	**99**	45	6
2000	0	1	4	2	40	20	18	**76**	38	14
2001	1	2	4	0	57	23	19	**64**	44	6

Source: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Farm Income Table B.2

Debt and bankruptcy plague Saskatchewan farmers (Table 4.2, 4.3). Since 1987 Saskatchewan has had the highest number of farm bankruptcy of any province in Canada, most often nearly doubling the rate of the closest contender. In 2001 Saskatchewan bore the brunt of farm bankruptcy, with nearly 30% of all farm bankruptcies across the country (Table 4.2). It is positive to note the decreasing statistics in this field, but, "[b]ankruptcies are only one form of financial failure and the bankruptcy statistics represent a small part of the total number of farmers who leave agriculture because of financial difficulties" (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Farm Income 49).

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expenses include all farm-related expenses including fertilizer, fuel, and machinery.

Farm debt (Table 4.3) in Saskatchewan does not compare to that of Ontario and Albertan farmers. In 2000 both these provinces showed a province wide agricultural debt of nearly nine million dollars. On the other hand, these provinces also show much higher net cash incomes per farmer than Saskatchewan (Table 4.1). To be in debt is not a ruinous circumstance, but to be in debt without a significant income may mean farm foreclosure.

Table 4.3: Farm Debt 1991-2000 (in millions $)

	PEI	NB	QU	ON	MB	SK	AB	BC
1991	188	226	3,525	4,813	1,989	**4,921**	6,401	1,155
1992	207	231	3.714	4,798	2,058	**4.740**	6,227	1,101
1993	235	231	3.631	4,975	2,020	**4,482**	6,360	1,177
1994	285	231	4,114	5,160	2,217	**4,411**	6,399	1,298
1995	310	271	4,393	5,442	2,422	**4,509**	6,613	1,368
1996	331	298	4,769	5,964	2,569	**4,773**	6,705	1,456
1997	372	327	5,355	6,868	2,814	**5,171**	7,398	1,608
1998	411	352	5,944	7,618	3,135	**5,492**	7,966	1,779
1999	435	376	6,705	8,219	3,500	**5,726**	8,457	1,989
2000	463	414	7,460	8,961	3,680	**5,807**	8,831	2,096

Source: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Farm Income Table B.1

In consideration of the earlier discussion of Farm Credit Corporation loans, it is also interesting to note that Saskatchewan farmers had the second highest rate of FCC loans receivable, 19%, as of March 2001 (next to Ontario farmers at 31%). Furthermore, Saskatchewan farmers have also taken out the majority of the loans under the new Farm Improvement and Marketing Cooperatives Loans Act (FIMCLA). In all of Canada, Saskatchewan farmers have taken 61% of these loans. The next closest province is Alberta, where farmers have registered a mere 12% of the new loans (Agriculture and

Agri-Food Canada, Farm Income Figures B3 and B4). As the FCC bankers are knocking at the door for payments, farmers must now take out new loans simply to keep their heads above water.

The statistics clearly paint a picture illustrating the problems with farming in Canada. Table 4.1 demonstrates the fact that farming is rarely an economically viable occupation. In the national context, Saskatchewan farmers take position at the bottom of the economic ladder. Because of this position Saskatchewan farm people gain the majority of their income from off-farm work (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Income Inequality Table 5). This means a greater workload for the farm family.

Statistics show that to be a farm woman in Saskatchewan means to live in a household where partners must work off farm, the bank is calling regarding past loans, and yet one must continue to apply for new government loans. The threat of bankruptcy is imminent and one will regularly see neighbours facing farm foreclosure and leaving the land. This is not a pretty picture. Dorothy comments:

> I think what brings a lot of pressure on farm women and men is the problems with the price with the commodities. You know the inputs and that sort of thing. If there was some way to control that situation, it would make everybody's life easier, because there's nothing worse than having financial problems and under that stress it's very difficult to get along - you know, in a home life, in society, or anything. Well, everybody knows what kind of problems it brings when there's little money. (Dorothy Young)

Returning to statistical portraits, it is important to see how many women in Canada – and Saskatchewan specifically – live under these conditions.

4.5 The Position of Farm Women in Saskatchewan Agriculture

In Canada less than 3% of all women live on farms (Government of Canada, Women in Canada 18). Of these women, 77% share management of the farm with one partner. Another 11% manage farms with three or more operators, and only 13% manage farms alone.[8] According to the 2001 census, on Saskatchewan farms, 77.7% of farm operators are male and 22.3% are female (Government of Canada, Women in Canada 108).[9] Since 1996 Saskatchewan has lost 9.1% of total farm operators (Government of Canada, Farm operators by farm type).[10]

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[8]Men, on the other hand, represent just over 55% of one-operator farms (Government of Canada, Women in Canada 108).

[9]It is important to understand a 1991 change in Statistics Canada's agricultural survey in order to understand these numbers. In 1991 Statistics Canada attempted to remedy a miscalculation of women's contribution to the farm. Previous to this time farmers could only name one operator per farm. As of the 1991 census government surveys began to allow up to three operators per farm. Still, men dominate the category 'primary operator' in census findings.

[10]I would like to point out a study done by Gloria Leckie regarding one-operator farms headed by women. This study is important as it represents one of the few Canadian studies regarding women as sole farmers. As I see it, there is a problem with Leckie's research in that she asks the question "Women Are Real Farmers – Aren't They?" in her title and then goes on to look only at farm women who farm alone. This is problematic as it once again marginalizes the position of farm women who work as part of a family farm. Farm men who work on a farm with family have access to the identity category "farmer," but this study allows farm women who work on the same type of farm to once again be overlooked as legitimate "farmers." On the other hand, I do believe that a more recent qualitative research study in this area is a necessary ambition in further understanding the position of farm women in Canada.

The majority of the farm operators leaving the field are under 35 years of age. In 1996 the average female farm operator was 46, and by the 2001 census she was 48. It is promising to note that the percent of female farm operators is rising.[11] Between 1996 and 2001, the number of female farm operators increased by 1%. Still, it is discouraging to see that overall people are leaving rural Saskatchewan. In the same time period the percentage of male operators decreased by 11.6% (Government of Canada, Farm operators by sex and age; Government of Canada, Women in Canada 108).

The rural Saskatchewan landscape is becoming very sparse. In the present agricultural scene, globalization and the more corporate nature of farming force farmers to 'get big or get out.' It seems many lack the financial resources necessary for the former and thus must choose the latter. All of the women I spoke with discussed the financial constraints of living on the farm. Dorothy lamented the fact that the farm could not "pay for itself" (Dorothy Young). Susan expressed the current farm financial crisis succinctly:

> I says, with farm income the way it's gone down, in the last few years, we're working now with an income that they had in the 1930's and '40s. And we're dealing with the prices of the year 2000! You know, so it's a struggle and you're always on a line of credit at the bank. And sometimes that line of credit even runs out. (Susan Brender)

The government knows people are leaving the land in droves - particularly young people - and makes no move to stop it. I see a future in which corporate farming is the norm. Our current farmers will be relegated to workers on the agribusiness field. Perhaps there

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[11]One must be aware in examining this data that although many women play a large role on the farm, they may still not be entering themselves (or their partner may not be entering them) under the category 'farm operator' on census forms. These data leave these women discounted.

is, somewhere in the words of these women, a viable future for the family farm. The government must look to farm people for solutions to the current farm crisis. The stories of the five women I interviewed are the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 5:

"Shut it off, Throw it out, and Go": The Participants Describe Their Work

I have already argued in Chapter Three that much of the work necessary to the ongoing success of a farm is, to some degree, segregated based upon gender lines. Therefore, I begin this chapter with an introduction to the types of work assigned to farm women. On the other hand, as I have stated earlier, this thesis is not only about the kinds of work farm women do, but how they feel about that work and their position on the farm. Thus, part two of this chapter examines how farm women's work is defined and understood within their families. Finally, part three develops some of the important themes regarding the women's definitions of the job title 'farmer.' What are women doing on the farm and how does this work affect identity, self-perception, and internal and external understandings about their roles on the farm?

5.1 The Work of Farm Women

> Are farm women superwomen? The woman's day seems staggering. First, there are the domestic tasks, which are more demanding than for urban households because the families are larger, and food, laundry, and physical support needs are greater; then the farm tasks, which become the equivalent of a second career; then the auxiliary enterprises, which in effect become a third career; and finally the civic activities, which becomes the fourth career. How can anyone do it? (Boulding 283-284)

Like most farm women, the participants in this project played varying roles on the farms. Some, like Julie, were very involved in almost all aspects of farm work. Others, for example Susan, were less active in direct farm production, spending more of her time

in community and paid work. Despite these variations, some jobs did appear to be designated exclusively 'farm women's work.'

In this section I focus on those jobs that were most often cited by the participants. These include: housework, hauling grain, handling livestock, cooking and delivering meals, gardening and food preservation. This does not represent a complete list of the jobs performed by the participants as that would go on at some length. Furthermore, I have not discussed child care in this section, as this work is most often a feature of all of farm women's activities, an aspect that is invariable in the participants' descriptions of their lives.

5.1.1 House Cleaning

Like most rural and urban women, all of the participants in this project reported that cleaning the house was primarily their job (Freedman Blau, Ferber, and Winkler; van de Vorst; McKinley Wright; Fast and Munro). While all of the participants said that having a clean house was important to them, they also said that it was stressful. With all of the other work that they have to do, this was just another burden. Moreover, they felt that their success in this realm was a clear reflection of their success as farm women.

Jane clearly feels that the state of her home is a reflection of her as a person. When she had her second stroke, Jane was left largely disabled and now dislikes her work in the home. She seems to believe that her housekeeping creates a flawed indication of her as a person:

> I like doing it [housework], but the thing is I can't complete it properly, eh. That's the part I don't like about it. And Dale, to get him to do it, well yeah. He says: 'I'm tired, I don't have time, do we have to, you can do it if you tried.' I can't wash the walls, I can't clean light fixtures - to get up on step ladders I can't do it. I like doing it, but it gets to be a pain when you can't really do it, eh. I told him, I says: 'Well would you go out in the field and do it half-assed. You don't like leaving it like that either, 'cause it's half done.' I said that the same thing I feel about doing housework too. But he says 'you can do it if you want to' - I still hear that shit. I want to do it good or else I don't even feel like doing it, eh. ...I think before I had my strokes I used to do my housework like regular. But then it just sort of slipped away. I don't know! (Jane Muller)

Like the other participants, Jane takes pride in a clean house. To be unable to fully do this work makes her feel ineffective and guilty. Her husband reinforces these feelings, suggesting that Jane is lazy and is lying about the effects of her stroke.

Julie feels particularly pressured when her house is left in decline during busy farming seasons. When it rains during harvest, Julie often has visitors drop by for coffee. She laments the fact that they "couldn't put their elbows on the table" and there was not a clean coffee cup in the house. Her husband relaxes until the fields dry, while Julie tries to make the house presentable.

The link between identity and home is strong for women. Studying the concept of 'home' as discussed by homeless women, Julia Wardhaugh notes that:

> 'Home' or 'inside' is equated with security, certainty, order, family and femaleness, while 'outside' or 'journey' becomes synonymous with risk, strangeness, chaos, masculinity and the public realm. Home is also constructed as a source of both individual and social identity. Psychoanalytic perspectives emphasise the home as a source of personal identity and view the house as a symbolic representation of the body ... while almost universally in Western culture the house is understood as an expression of social identity and status. ... The home thus becomes a source of identity and status, and allows for a sense of connection to both people and places, to the past and to the future. (96)

Farm men often consider the condition of their fields to be a reflection of themselves as 'farmers.' The Sunday drive to 'check crops' is a regular activity for farm families and everyone knows who owns land in the area. From the condition of the grain any farm person can tell the mistakes made in spraying or seeding. My father would often comment on fields as we drove to the city or simply travelled to town. These fields were a means to form an opinion of the (presumed) male farmer who owned the land. On the other hand, farm women consider the appearance of their houses to be a reflection of themselves. While farm women are doing a great deal of work on the fields, these spaces are not considered reflective of them as workers.

5.1.2 Hauling Grain

Many of the participants note that trucking grain is their responsibility. This job requires immense amounts of patience and the ability to multi-task is essential. Hauling grain is essentially a waiting game. The farm woman takes the grain truck out to the field and waits until the hopper on the combine is full of grain. The farmer then signals (most farmers flash the hazard lights as an indicator) that the hopper is full and the farm woman must get to the combine as quickly as possible. A grain truck generally holds two tons of grain, or two combine hoppers. Once the combine is emptied, the grain hauler moves the truck out of the way and waits for another hopper of grain to fill the truck completely. The farm woman then drives the grain truck to the storage bins to unload. Upon arrival at the storage bins, the farm woman backs the truck up, opens the gate of the truck, and allows the grain to flow to the auger which transports it into the bin. The task of

unloading the grain must be completed quickly as the farmer could have another hopper at any moment. If the bin should fill up the farm woman must move the auger to another bin, line it up, and back the grain truck up again. Once unloading is complete the farm woman races back to the field in hopes of returning before the operation is halted due to a full hopper and no grain truck. Much rides on the speed and accuracy of the person responsible for hauling grain and the job can be very stressful.

Between these tasks the grain hauler is also responsible for picking up necessities such as food and coffee. On the farm I grew up on the grain storage bins were on the home quarter. On the way to unload we would stop the truck, run into the house, and put coffee on to brew. Once unloading was complete we would stop at the house on the way out of the yard, put the coffee in the thermos, and make lunch as quickly as possible in order to be back to the field in time for the next hopper.

On my parents farm harvest was both stressful and exciting. Waiting in the field for the combine to fill was a great bonding space for my mother, my younger sister, and me. While keeping one eye on the combine, we sang songs, read aloud from the *Readers Digest*, or played 'I spy.' When Dad had a hopper of grain he would flash the hazard lights and all activity would stop as we raced across the field, avoiding trampling the swathes of grain, and move into position, allowing him to unload into the grain truck.

My childhood memories of harvest season in that grain truck are both good and bad, but I know that my mother always found the season most stressful. This feeling was shared by the participants in this project. Carolyn worries about the care she provides for her aging mother, whom she leaves alone in the house for hours while hauling grain.

Dorothy describes feeling guilty as her children often have only a few bags of chips to eat all day; there is no time to make a meal and food has to be consumed on the go. Julie describes trying to change a baby's cloth diapers while living in a grain truck 12 to 17 hours a day:

> We had no child seats so I would make a bed in the truck, take home-made cloth diapers and go to the field whenever needed. When the older two were done school for the day I would park my grain truck, jump in the 1/2 ton and pick them up and off to the field we would go. ... My day still consisted of chores, lunch for the day, packing two school lunches after trucking grain until two or three in the morning. I mostly remember being very tired and sometimes prayed for rain so I could rest. For the women who had off farm jobs the situation was nearly unbearable. (Julie Green)

Dorothy describes coming home from her work at the library to another full days work hauling grain:

> I mean sometimes when you get in at 4 o'clock in the afternoon and he wants you to haul grain until 3 o'clock, 4 o'clock in the morning, and I go *I can't do it, I'm tired.* That's one thing that is harder, I mean being a woman on the farm, is - I mean every woman's different, but I know, myself, *I can't put the hours* in. I mean, *I play out.* I mean, I can't, *I'm not physically as strong* either, or you know, *I just don't have the drive* to go that many hours. (emphasis mine, Dorothy Young)

Dorothy blames her perceived inadequacy on her shortcomings in determination and physical strength. It seems to me that it is just not possible to do all of the work required of farm women. Yet many of these women attempt to perform multiple types of work and all of these are interrupted by the long hours required in hauling grain during the harvest season.

5.1.3 Livestock Handling

Only three of the farms examined have any involvement in livestock farming. Julie and Carolyn both live on farms that are involved in livestock handling on a larger level, both having many head of cattle and pigs. Jane and her husband Dale have recently ventured into raising cows on a very small scale (less than five head of cattle) as well. All of these women find that the care and feeding of livestock is primarily their responsibility.

Caring for livestock is not simply a matter of dumping pails of feed into troughs. It requires a whole range of work. Working with livestock demands that the farmer is present every day. Cows must be milked or they get sick and all animals must be fed twice daily without fail. Livestock handling can also include making chop (livestock feed), repairing fences, baling hay for bedding, and helping in the birthing process.

Carolyn describes raising animals as "hard work. We had probably a hundred pigs and we had cattle and had to fence and cut hay and haul bales and everything" (Carolyn Wood). Carolyn comments: "I did lots of farm work. I mean the cows had to be milked and we had chickens, had to feed the chickens and butcher them for meat for the winter. In the wintertime, had to go to the dugout and dig the water hole for the cows to drink" (Carolyn Wood). Carolyn describes milking the cows with her sons every morning before school:

> [W]e used to milk cows to buy groceries with. When the boys grew up we used to milk about ten cows ... in the morning before they went to school. Had to go get the cows [from the pasture] and milk the cows. And then they went to school! (Carolyn Wood)

This type of work often provides the family with another form of income. The 'cream cheque' is often considered farm women's money, but like other income farm women generate it is often reinvested in the farm and family (Cooper 175; Ghorayshi 574-575). This is also true in Carolyn's household: "That was grocery money actually. Sort of. Well, we bought clothes with it too, 'cause from ten cows we probably shipped 2 or 3 cans a week and we used to get maybe $40 from the cream" (Carolyn Wood).

Working with the livestock is also a responsibility for Julie. This is very stressful for Julie as it often interferes with her responsibilities with her children. In the winter she leaves her two young daughters, Joan and Marcia, in the house by themselves for hours at a time:

> We had 150-200 hogs and 20 head of cattle. My day consisted of chores in the morning after Sandra and Richard [the two older children] got on the bus. This meant leaving my two little ones in the house. ... Chores consisted of cleaning the barn morning and night which took about 3/4 of an hour. Feeding the cows chop and square bales. I never kept chickens in the winter, so chores took about 2 hours in the morning. At night Richard would come out with me and Sandra would watch the two little ones. I liked chores at night because I was not worrying every minute. Sandra was very mature for a ten year old and she took care of the kids lots when she wasn't in school. (Julie Green)

Besides these stresses associated with livestock care, both Julie and Jane describe the emotional anxiety they suffer as they become attached to the animals. Jane says that she is nearly unable to eat the meat of the butchered livestock, as she always imagines the beautiful animals that she had fed only months ago. Both Jane and Julie know that butchering the animals is unavoidable, but they certainly do not like the chore. Julie describes both her own and her children's anxiety in losing their beloved 'pets':

> We had a calf that we bottle fed as the mother cow refused to accept this calf. This calf followed the kids to the school bus, slept on our front step, grazed on our lawn. Then farm reality kicked in and we had to sell our 'pet' Jenny. The kids never understood and were very angry with us. I had ducks one year and they were so pretty, they followed me everywhere. I knew I couldn't butcher them so I kept feeding them past the fat stage and one by one the foxes and coyotes got them. I was happy for their disappearance as Steve was getting on my case to butcher them as winter was setting in. So I guess farming taught me reality as do not make pets out of the animals because they were income. (Julie Green)

Julie found that her angst in butchering the livestock was not the worst aspect of the operation. Her youngest daughter, Marcia, had to be treated for anxiety and medicated after watching Julie butcher chickens.

> My youngest daughter had to witness one day of butchering chickens. She kind of lost it and she wouldn't let me near her. I tried to hold her and she would run away and hide. I took her to the doctor and in the car she was cringing as far away from me as she could. The doctor said she saw me as a 'killer' and she was scared of me. This day of butchering chickens was against my wishes, but my mother-in-law said Marcia had to see it sooner or later. Never would have been my choice. I was an adult and couldn't bring myself to seeing it or doing it for a long time. This memory stands out in my mind because it took a long time for Marcia to trust me again. (Julie Green)

Many aspects of farm women's work place them in positions that directly contradict their mothering or caregiving role. This leaves farm women feeling guilty. The participants often tried to alleviate this guilt by situating these circumstances as positives – these experiences help their children to 'grow up fast' and 'face reality.' Nevertheless, it is obvious that many of the women truly do not want future generations to experience these types of situations. Julie remarks:

> I remember thinking this is not fair, not mother or child should have to do this. I remember having bladder infections during harvest and suffering with it until it rained. I also remembered thinking no daughter or daughter in-law of mine will ever do this. This is not humane. (Julie Green)

5.1.4 Cooking and Delivering Meals

All of the participants report full responsibility for all aspects of food preparation in their households. Most of the women simply take this aspect of their work for granted, not commenting on it very often. It is often mentioned as an addition to their lengthy list of work responsibilities. Susan says:

> My duties on the farm consist of running the household, going to get parts on occasion, making meals and taking them to the field, um, taking gas to the machines when they're working, combining or seeding or whatever, helping to put the grain in the bins, fill up the fertilizer on the seed drills and so on. Things like that ... just, just assistant mainly. *(laughs)* (Susan Brender)

Carolyn also notes:

> I go out to the farm from town, 'cause David is working my land. So, I go and haul grain and cook and do everything that I used to do. (Carolyn Wood)

Finally, Dorothy echoes the other women:

> In the spring I haul fertilizer and seed to the seeder. And, do some harrowing, packing, stone picking. And meals. (Dorothy Young)

It seems that the participants may, to some degree, appreciate the link between their cooking and farm work. Still, when asked, Susan does not include this as a chore that permits the label 'farmer.' I believe that the other participants would very much agree.

Julie and Jane discussed the problems of food preparation as they both suffer ill health. Julie feels herself unappreciated as a person, but simply viewed as a cooking and cleaning machine – one not allowed to suffer health problems:

> That morning I couldn't breathe, Steve came upstairs to see what was wrong. I was gasping for air. I slept for three nights sitting up - if I laid down I couldn't breathe. Well ok, he will take me to the doctor. Well first we went [grocery] shopping ... Then I cooked a big ham, mashed potatoes, then we went to [the medical centre] where they immediately put me in the hospital. I had pneumonia and fluid in my lungs. ... I came home ten days later to a very dirty house. Justice? The pot I cooked the ham in was still dirty. (Julie Green)

Jane, once again, suffers Dale's disbelief of her illness and again he accuses her of being too lazy to take responsibility for her duties in food preparation and delivery. She describes how difficult her work in food preparation has become with her recent debility:

> I got a board from the disabilities. I do all of my vegetables and cutting. Like it's got nails, like these stainless steel nails, like to hold it? It just grabs it and then you just use your one hand like you could, eh. I do try like with potatoes, but oh my God! Like if you gotta have potatoes in half an hour I don't think so. It takes me way longer just to peel them like that, eh. (Jane Muller)

In addition to taking full responsibility for meal preparation on a regular basis, the farm women take on different food-related tasks during seeding and harvest. The participants are responsible for delivering meals to the field when the men are working. Most farm women pack lunch into a large cardboard box and take it to the field. Jane, on the other hand, has to transport each item separately out to the truck. With the stroke, Jane has lost the use of the left side of her body and is unable to carry anything that would require two hands:

> I gotta make how many trips out of the house. 'Cause before I'd put everything in a box, carry it outta the house and go. Now I can't carry the bloody box out, eh. I gotta take everything out separately and I hate it. Oh, up and down. It takes a lot of time to get from the house to the car even, eh. To go out to the field and then back in, same damn thing. Lug everything back in, so really that's worse that ever, eh. (Jane Muller)

Dale only adds to Jane's frustration when she finally arrives in the field. Jane often must sit in the field, waiting for him to come off the tractor to eat. Jane comments: "I don't like sitting out there and waiting for a half an hour, eh. If I take out something hot I like to stop now and eat it, not wait half an hour. [He says] 'Well you should have waited'" (Jane Muller). Dale's actions indicate a disregard for the importance of Jane's time and emphasize the primacy of the farm work. Her work is insignificant and can be allowed to wait until he is ready to come off the tractor and get his meal. These small acts of power are some of the most dominant cues for farm women; they are reminders that the work of farm men is most important and that all else must come second to that work. In addition, Jane's comment once again illustrates the reflection of self that the participants see in their work. She has exerted herself to make a nice hot meal and that effort is ruined by Dale's indifference.

Susan notes that her husband rarely eats at all during harvest as it makes him tired. She feels guilty and is impelled to continue to at least bring him a big supper:

> So, he'll just take an apple and his bottle of water or something and go ... and ... he's good until supper time ... and then ... usually at supper time if he's still working on the field I'll take a full meal out for him, like a cooked meal. It wouldn't be sandwiches or something like that, it would be a full-course meal. (Susan Brender)

Susan evidently understands a link between her husband's eating habits and her worth as a wife. It seems that, for the participants, a full, hot meal is representative of a successful and able farm wife.

5.1.5 Gardening and Food Preservation

All of the participants keep some type of a garden. There are those who keep extremely large gardens, like Jane and Julie. Others, like Susan and Carolyn, keep smaller gardens, with just enough vegetables to cut down on costs at the grocery store. On the other hand Dorothy accepts the fact that she keeps a garden, but it is not a plot of land of which she is proud. Dorothy notes that it is often full of weeds and always left to the last chore. I will look at the discussions I had with each of the participants about this small scale 'farm' of their own.

Jane has an immense garden. In fact, Jane's garden is too large and a great deal of the produce is left to waste with only herself, Dale, and Isabella to feed. Yet still, she feels compelled to plant the large plot every year. Between the problems associated with her stroke and the fact that a great deal of the produce never gets used, Jane has finally decided to decrease her garden by half. Before this year, Jane annually planted 450 to 500 hills of potatoes! This is in addition to broccoli, radishes, onions, beans, corn, peas, tomatoes, cucumbers, strawberries, and raspberries.

This garden truly shocked me. Of all the participants Jane had the smallest family and yet she plants the largest garden! Jane states that her garden is "too big." She knows that her family does not need this much food, but for years she has continued to plant this

immense plot. On top of planting and caring for this large garden, Jane freezes vegetables every year only to throw them out the next spring. It is amazing to see all of this work left to waste as her family simply could not consume all of the food she had taken the time to grow and prepare.

Later in the interview Jane explains her hidden motivations in planting her huge garden every year. When I ask her what she does to relieve stress, she replies:

> What the hell do I do? I come in the house, I usually just sit on the couch and watch TV. And get yelled at when he comes in the TV's on! Can't you be out there, helping or some stupid thing. I don't know, I never really thought about those situations. ... Or else I go out to my garden, I know he doesn't like coming out there, he'll beep the horn, eh. I'm not running for no horn! (ugh) That is just plain – I don't even know what you would call that. I just don't like the idea of that, eh. It's just like 'oh geez they're saying something you gotta go jump. I don't like (grr) ... (Jane Muller)

The garden provides Jane with a means of escape. Jane's garden is quite inaccessible. It is a bit of a hike across the yard and through a hedge to get there. She hears Dale calling her, beeping the horn on the vehicle, but she can just ignore it, pretend she does not hear. Dale will not trek through the trees to get to her garden – it is her refuge. Furthermore, he cannot yell at her for gardening. She is being productive and working hard in her garden. This escape fills Jane's needs and so every year she prepares her great garden. She keeps it weeded and fights off the potato bugs. She creates a beautiful space of her own.

Julie also keeps a very large garden, but for her this space provides no escape. Her garden is a duty like all her other work. Julie also has to can all of her vegetables and make pickles from the garden. This garden led to a great deal of work that coincided with her most stressful time of year, the farm harvest. Julie comments:

> Farm jobs first and foremost. You juggle your other duties which all have to be done. Example, meals, laundry, gardening, cutting grass, and cleaning house. This is done only when they don't need you. I live by the phone in case they break down, then drop what ever I was doing - even if it was baking a cake - shut it off, throw it out, and go. So I learned how to use my time very well. (Julie Green)

One year Julie decided not to plant a garden. She was in a great deal of pain from her sciatica – a very painful problem that pinches the sciatic nerve in the hip, leaving the sufferer in extreme pain with every movement. She said that Steve reacted, saying that she was lazy: "Well, lazy or what. The part I notice is if you are no longer able, you are no longer" (Julie Green).

Julie's garden is clearly visible from the road leading to the house. Because Julie feels that she is never allowed the time to care for a garden that she can be proud of, the work has become a rather poor reflection of her abilities. In turn she learned to resent the work and dislike the garden.

While Julie expresses some strong feelings about her garden, some of the participants regard their gardens rather apathetically. Susan sees her garden purely as a means of subsistence for the farm and never feels the need to plant a very big plot. Despite the fact that her garden is small, Julie does see value in the time that it takes her to care for her gardening and preserve food:

> You know, like I says you look after a garden and you take all that stuff in and you can in the fall. You know, you buy peaches by the case and whatever fruit and you can it all and you make these preserves for all winter and you spend hours and hours doing all these kind of things. You know, and, there's no recognition anywhere for that. (Susan Brender)

Dorothy's garden is not a space that she is proud of. She recognizes her lack of a "green thumb" and said that her garden is "full of dill," a weed (also used as an herb) that will grow everywhere if left unchecked (Dorothy Young). Dorothy and I never even talked about her garden until her husband, Charlie, cited it as evidence that she could not be a real 'farmer.' When Dorothy told me that she considered herself a legitimate 'farmer,' Charlie, home at the time of the interview, said "I hope you don't farm like you garden." He undermined her status as a legitimate 'farmer,' citing her poor gardening abilities as proof. Dorothy's only response was to laugh, suggesting that she grow a hedge so that people could not see her weed filled garden (Dorothy Young). Charlie clearly disempowered Dorothy through his words. He refused to recognize the work she does, pointing out her failure instead. She spoke up, claiming her title as 'farmer,' and he reminded her that she could never be good enough to fill the position.

Whether the garden is loved or hated by the participants it is a necessary part of their work as farm women. For some a refuge and for others an embarrassment, this small plot of land represents a great deal of work, it reflects personal worth to the outside world, and it provides necessary sustenance for the family. In either case, the garden is an important part of being a farm woman; it is a productive and industrious means of taking part in the family farm. Nonetheless, it is another aspect of farm women's work that is often taken for granted by other members of the operation.

5.2 Defining Farm Women's Work

It is clear that farm women work very hard. Despite this, farm women's contributions to both paid and unpaid work are almost always overlooked or considered of less importance by farm men. This perception is then internalized and farm women consider their work secondary to the 'real work' of the farm; in turn they consider themselves second class farmers. Farm women and men understand that every aspect of women's work is interruptable. Whether it is paid work, child care, or domestic work, all of this work must stop if the farm demands women's labour. Secondly, farm women are prone to understand themselves as 'assistants,' 'go-fors,' or 'helpers,' but they rarely truly consider themselves 'farmers.'

5.2.1 Farm Women's Work is Interruptable

Maureena McKinley Wright discusses the difference in men's and women's farm work as it relates to time. She notes that the work assigned to men is such that it cannot be easily interrupted. They are often in the field, working on a tractor, unavailable to simply leave the task to another time. Women's work on the other hand, must be available to interruption; farm women do not have control of time in their work. As McKinley Wright notes: "Controlling task timing had positive consequences for women in terms of being able to maximize economic benefits through combining two or more labor options; however, this control had negative consequences as well, especially by overloading women with demands on their time" (228). That seems to be the frustration for the participants in this project: the lack of control over work time. One might claim

that this means more freedom to do work as necessary, but it seems simply to leave farm women working harder and at all hours of the day. McKinley Wright continues:

> [W]omen's work has more 'permeable' boundaries than does men's work. Men engage in work that cannot easily be set aside to help a child with homework, to go to town for a machine part, or to go over to Grandpa's place to fix his supper. Women often engage in work that is easily set aside. Gardening can be put off; chickens can be fed early or late; housework can wait. Work that can be set aside probably will. (230)

The lack of control over time and work even applies to those areas which are regulated by farm outsiders. This is illustrated in farm women's paid work. In the winter time farm women are often encouraged to find paid work, but when spring comes, and seeding is underway, the participants describe pressures to quit their jobs and take a larger role on the farm. Julie says:

> I got a job in a grocery store. I had to leave work during seeding and harvest. My boss was also our friend so this was easy to do. ... I also worked at times in the cafe and local bar which I also enjoyed. My husband did not like me going to work but it gave me independence and I am a people person. (Julie Green)

She describes sporadic periods of paid work, always having to ask her employers to work around the schedule of the farm.

Carolyn also notes that she was impelled to leave her work in a local factory. She felt too much pressure from her responsibilities on the farm and in the home to continue her paid labour. Carolyn describes her work experience: "I worked there for, like, all summer and then I was laid off for the winter and next year I went for awhile and then I quit 'cause it was too hard. Go to work at four o'clock on the night shift, come home at midnight and, kids at home" (Carolyn Wood). Dorothy notes that her paid work is

affected by the time demands of the farm as well. Often during harvest she works a full day at her paid job, only to return home to be sent to the field to work into the early hours of the morning. Recently she changed jobs in order to decrease the amount of time she spends off the farm. While all of the participants in this study have taken part in paid work at one point or another, they all recognize that this work is not as important as the work of the farm. Farm women's paid work is considered expendable and must be ceased if her labour power is needed on the farm (Boulding).

One may assume that the interruption of paid work is necessary as the farm might be the primary source of family income. However, research demonstrates that this may not be true. Paid work appears to be an important source of income, often supporting the needs of the farm itself. Nettie Wiebe notes that 63% of the respondents in her study re-invest 75% to 100% of their off-farm income into the farming operation (Weaving New Ways 18). More recently, Martz and Bruekner's statistical study of farm women found that 34% of respondents found that their off-farm work was a benefit to the farm as it increased the cash flow, 3% noted that off-farm work had allowed their farm to expand, and another 3% found that the income from this work helped the farm to survive (91). Off-farm work is not just a secondary source of income; it is often an essential factor, keeping the farm viable. Nonetheless, it is still subject to interruptions.

Just as paid work is subject to farm interruptions, so is women's domestic work and child care activities. If the farm demands, they drop their own work in order to support the work of their husbands, the real 'farmers.' When my mother heard that I was using time work diaries in my research she decided to complete her own work diary. I

would like to include an entry from that writing here. It certainly illustrates the inferior status farm men apply to farm women's work:

> Typical Spraying Day – Get up, coffee, breakfast. Wow, I will get my grass cut and some weeding done in my garden. Only after I keep an eye on the 250 gallon water tank. 'Don't let it over flow, watch the pump doesn't quit.' Can't see this from my garden. Well I'll cut grass, should have ½ hour to do this. ... Go down to tank, almost full. Might as well wait. Shut everything off, go to the house for a drink. The light on the phone is flashing [someone has called while she was out] – oh no, he's running out of chemical. Run to elevator in -- to pick up chemical, what no chemical [there], oh no. Go to [the next town] – none. I have no cell phone so I ask the guys at the elevator if I can use their phone. Phone [another town], yes they have chemical, right on! Ok, now instead of going seventeen miles I have to go fourty-five. At least I will get it. Come home. Light flashing on phone! Him – "Where were you? Call when you get in." I call. Well, he might not need the chemical, but stay by phone just in case. I go out to garden and run in every fifteen minutes for two hours. No call. Very pissed off. He comes home to get water truck, so happy he might have enough chemical. Eats quickly, goes back out. Now I know I will have to return this chemical one day soon. Still wait for call that never comes. Not too much done today again.

I laugh when I read this entry as this was very typical of my days on the farm. It was so frustrating when we would all get up the next morning for coffee and everyone would begin listing what they had done the day before. The men had often sprayed acres of land, bragging they were done the field. My mother could only say that she had mowed the tiny piece of lawn by the grain bins and weeded the potatoes. The other work she had done in that day - laundry, cleaning, cooking, and running for chemical - did not count at the morning coffee table.

Many of the participants describe situations like this as the worst part of farming. When I ask Susan about her least favourite job she responds:

> I guess least favourite job would be when everything is very stressed and tense and you have to hurry and do something and you know ... drop everything and away you go ... kind of thing, eh? It is unplanned. (laughs) Emergency work! (Susan Brender).

Susan does not respond with a particular job when I ask her this question. Instead she begins discussing an aspect of all of her jobs: this inherent understanding that her work is not important and that it can be interrupted as commanded by the farm.

Repeatedly farm women's work and time are established as a function of the farm. The inferior perception of Dorothy's work is evident. In the midst of doing laundry, making jelly, and starting lunch, she drops everything and runs to town for parts. The remarkable aspect is that she doesn't even comment on this – it is simply a part of the nature of her regular work.

TIME	ACTIVITIES	OTHER ACTIVITIES AT SAME TIME	COMMENTS
7:00 AM	Breakfast Washing clothes Stripping beds	Making a batch of raspberry jelly	
10:30 AM	Started stew for dinner	Washing clothes	
11:00 AM	Run to [local town] to pick supplies for husband		
12:00 AM	Arrive in town, pick up supplies and also some cards and wrapping paper		
1:00 PM	Get home and quickly load garbage in truck to take to dump	Check dinner	
1:30 PM	Peel potatoes Make salad	Washing clothes	
2:00 PM	Dinners on the table	Washing clothes	A little late to be eating dinner!

The only time that she does comment on her work is to denigrate her performance, noting that dinner is not on the table on time.

Farm women are regularly reminded that their work must be available to all interruptions and they begin to internalize an understanding of their work as secondary. When conscious of the essential nature of their work, women can find this very frustrating. Julie describes her resentment: "[W]e bear the children, we stay home and look after these children, we cook, we do housework, books, laundry, chores and help on the farm. We are go-fors - we jump at first call. Our work and chores come second" (Julie Green). The words these women use to describe their work characterize a state of emergency: they jump, they run, and they drop. They do these things in a hurry as they understand that they are now working on the essential labour of the farm.

The participants often discuss receiving phone calls from the field if the men are hungry, they need parts, or have broken down. It was apparent that the male farmers have cellular telephones, but the farm women do not seem to have access to this technology themselves. A cellular telephone would mean greater freedom for farm women. Consider the story told by my mother: she had to run to the house and back many times to see if my father had called needing the fertilizer. Her time would have been more her own if she had a cellular phone which she could take to the garden or out doing yard work. None of the participants in this project clearly stated that they did not have a cellular phone, but the stories they relate show a lack of control over their work time and the necessity that they be by the telephone in case the male farmers require 'assistance.'

While the examples related thus far illustrate short-term delays in women's work, there is also the extended interruption of women's work. Julie notes the fact that her

housework, essential as it is, be put aside in busy farming seasons. She waits for rain to give her a chance to take care of her domestic chores:

> I remember ... combining for 12-16 hour days, making lunch and going to the field. The house was a disaster. Then it rained. Steve left in the morning. I didn't know where to start. Well he met up with these friends of his on the road. He brought them home. You couldn't even put your elbows on the table, it was so dirty. I didn't have a clean coffee cup ... I was ashamed, what a reflection on me. I apologized and made excuses for the mess. I cleaned off the table so they could drink, which they did and then they fought, and then finally in late afternoon, they left. I had made sandwiches for them. I sat down and cried, then filled the sink to soak some dishes as the sun was shining and soon it would be dry out there and we would start all over. But you see this was my job. And his was done when it rained. He drank and slept. I cleaned and got caught up and slept when I could at night. My job didn't go away even for awhile. (Julie Green)

Farm women allow their domestic work to accumulate in order to work on the farm. When the farming work is done this work is waiting for them in the home. This does not mean that farm men 'help' in the home, just as farm women have 'helped' on the farm. Rather, women take on the housework only after contributing to the important work of the farm.

5.2.2 Farm Women are "Assistants"

Farm women do a lot of the running around required for the farm. They spend a lot of their time travelling to local towns for tractor parts, chemical, and other farm supplies. They do whatever is necessary: the unglamorous work essential to the efficient operation of the farm. They are the 'helper,' the 'go-fors,' essential to the ongoing success of the agricultural operation, they are not 'farmers.'

Elise Boulding notes the importance of the role of the 'gofer' in her research with farm women in the United States:

> 'Gofer' is the glue that holds the modern farm together. When a piece of machinery breaks down, as it does frequently parts must be replaced instantly, particularly at harvest time, and only the wife may drop everything in field or kitchen to do it. 'We keep the roads hot getting parts' is the way one farm wife put it. The sense that she is the crisis person, the emergency specialist, always on call, induces both pride and frustration. (271)

While Boulding recognizes the importance of an often overlooked job title, there are those who continue to undervalue the work of farm women. Even those who would write from the perspective of farm women express a clear understanding that farm women are mere 'helpers' in the farming operation. Gisele Ireland conducted a study for Concerned Farm Women. In describing a farm woman's day Ireland writes: "The demands on her time as a mother, wife and *helper* sometimes frustrate her and she wonders if she gave too much to one and too little to the other" (emphasis mine, 4). She clearly expresses the understanding that farm women are important, but they are not 'farmers.'

The participants in this research project express frustration in their role as go-for. Julie articulates feelings about how this work reflects her status on the farm: "We are go-fors - we jump at first call. Our work and chores come second" (Julie Green). Jane echoes these words: "'Gotta do this, go do this' – just like a bloody secretary, eh. We don't get paid secretary's wages. We don't get paid nothing as far as I'm concerned. ... It's go-foring. Well, I guess you're helping out, but I just don't know" (Jane Muller). For me, this illustrates the lack of appreciation that farm women experience. They feel that they have to do these chores and that the inconvenience of their work is unseen by

their partners. They are merely assistants, subordinate helpers, or "'factors' in male producers' success" (Haney 179).

When all is said and done, farm women must understand themselves as second class citizens on the farm. They have work that must be done, work that is essential to the farm, but this work must be left if they are needed on the farm (Ghorayshi 580-582). When they are needed on the farm, they are made to feel less than the male farmers. In the grand scheme of things male children are even more apt to be understood as legitimate 'farmers' than farm women. The women understand this perception of their work and self-perceptions of their contributions to the farm are defined in consequence; they understand themselves as the 'second class farmer.'

I have looked at farm women's work in terms of the particular jobs and have considered how that work creates women's perceptions regarding their identity as farmers. I now move on, attempting to clarify the term 'farmer' as understood by farm women. How do these participants understand the identity category 'farmer'? Do they, in any ways, fit that category?

5.3 Defining 'Farmer'

There seems to be four major factors that determine one's status as a true 'farmer' according to the participants in this project. A 'farmer' is firmly devoted and attached to the land and machinery involved in the farm, a 'farmer' is recognized as such by larger institutions involved in the business, a 'farmer' is essentially male, and a 'farmer' does not allow issues of health to impede his work on the farm. Each of these aspects of being a

'farmer' are simple realities that the women laid out in a matter of fact manner when discussing their status and the work involved in being part of a family farm. I address each of these aspects within the larger discussion of socially constructed identity category of 'farmer.'

5.3.1 Farmers are Attached to the Land and Machinery

Boulding notes a detachment from the land and machinery as a major impediment to farm women identifying as legitimate 'farmers.' She writes

> The refusal to be called farmers is based on real asymmetries in the social definition of farm roles for men and women. For example ... the man *must* go out to work in the fields and handle the machinery. The wife *may*, but unless she is widowed (and often not even then), there is no *must* about it. ... Intuitively, most of the women seem to feel that the husband's longer hours out of doors gives him superior decision-making rights, no matter how much knowledge women have through their bookkeeping and other work. (emphasis in original, 274)

The women in this project also note a connection between time on the actual field and farm status. Susan describes three jobs that she does not do, thus disqualifying herself as a farmer:

> If I was to consider myself a farmer, Lisa, I would have to ... umm... haul grain, drive a tractor, drive a combine, one of those aspects of grain farming. In a major role in order to consider myself a farmer. I consider myself a farmer's wife, because I am married to the man who does all those jobs, and, and he has basically supported me for 34 years (laughs) doing those jobs. And, and I support him. (Susan Brender)

The most compelling aspect of this for me is that earlier in the interview Susan notes that she runs for parts, fills seed and fertilizer, fuels machinery, and helps to unload grain trucks. Yet these jobs do not count as the work of a 'farmer' in her opinion. For her a

farmer must do one of these jobs that she has deemed most important and that, coincidentally, are not a part of her regular duties.

Jane also rejects the identity 'farmer,' noting that she does not regard her work as truly attached to the land:

> Lisa: Would you consider yourself a farmer?
> Jane: I don't know.
> Lisa: You don't know?
> Jane: No.
> Lisa: Would you have any way of maybe defining yourself? Like maybe 'farm wife', or...
> Jane: That I would say, *just a farm wife*. That, like, 'cause I don't do the work on the farm, like on the land. I think that's why I don't ... I don't know. I just never really thought about it, eh.
> Lisa: Just never really thought about defining yourself.
> Jane: No, just live on the farm, that's it. You know. 'Oh, well, what's your occupation' – farming. (Jane Muller)

Once again, earlier in the interview Jane talks about trucking grain, running for parts, and driving the swather and combine. Yet when asked whether she is a 'farmer' she says that she doesn't "do the work on the farm, like on the land."

5.3.2 External Reminders of Women's Second-Class Farm Status

The participants in this project also understood that if they were real 'farmers' that status would be both accepted and respected by the larger farming community. This was often not the case. Banks, researchers, grain elevator operators, and the Canadian Wheat Board clearly define the word 'farmer' in male terms. These larger farming institutions are a daily reminder for farm women; the policies and procedures employed by these institutions remind farm women that 'real farmers' are men.

Julie provides an example of how larger farming institutions can play a large role in discouraging women from accepting the identity category of 'farmer'; Julie cautiously used the term, but then, throughout her biography, listed the multitude of facts that made her waver in understanding herself as a legitimate 'farmer':

> I have never called myself a farmer as all questionnaires would ask for job description which usually became 'farmer's wife' or home maker. In the last few years ... I called myself a farmer. ... see my [friend] whose husband dropped her after 30 years of marriage .... She phones the elevator for information on grain being sold. Low and behold her name is not on the permit book, so they can't give her any information at all. She phones the local co-op where they have equity. She gets nowhere because the equity check is made out solely to him. I check this out and yes the check is made out to the husband. Any Canadian wheat board payments are made out to the husband. So he has all the power. And you ask me if I am considered a FARMER. Again I say no. Not just by me but by all aspects of farming, elevators, co-ops, and government programs. I get to sign my name if we are mortgaging the land. I am expected to do farm labour, books and all the house work is mine, and I say I don't have anything. (emphasis in original, Julie Green)

The participants note the fact that their names are not on the permit book or grain cheques as further documented and legal proof that they are not legitimate 'farmers.' Susan notes this fact at the bank:

> Umm ... for a while we had an account that ... a joint account for the farm, where ... they said that - in the bank - that he was the only one depositing money into it, therefore, his name should be the one that's on all the cheques. And I was just given signing authority on the cheques, but I had to put down that I had some kind of authority ... some kind of initials after my name that gave me authority to draw money from his account, eh? And we had a big argument, because I told him, this is not right, and I feel degraded that I should have to put power of attorney after my signature. When I sign a cheque that was family income, eh? And, so, he went back to the bank and straightened them out! (laughs). ... [E]ven now, for the account, the joint account in Townville he has to keep reminding them that I have signing authority for all these cheques, because they still, because he's still, he's the only one depositing, you know, to it. That they still feel

> that, you know, he should be the only one with the power to draw from it, you know. And, I think, it's tied up with the line of credit, more than anything else. They figure that in order for me to withdraw money from that account I should also have my name on that line of credit. Ok, so in a, a sense you can see their point, but at the same time, it is family income. It's coming off of our farm ... You know, just because my name isn't on the grain cheque when he deposits it ... you know. And I had nothing to do with making that harvest or whatever, you know. Like you says, my role is minor on the farm, but I think it's enough of a role that I've helped to make this income. ... You know, and just because my name isn't on that cheque when they make it out at the elevator doesn't mean that I didn't have a role in making this. (Susan Brender)

The frustration that Susan feels is palpable in this transcript. She understands their point of view at the bank – yes, she does look unproductive. She is frustrated that all of this work looks like nothing to those outside of the operation. Julie agrees with her:

> I believe if farm women were to be classified as farmers why don't we get grain cheques with our names on them too, why don't we have our names on permit books, why at the beginning was our names not put on the land. Why are we expected to be hired hands with no pay. We get no glory from farming. (Julie Green)

5.3.3 'Farmers' are Essentially Male

According to the participants, a 'farmer' is male. Parvin Ghorayshi notes this perception in his work with farm women in Quebec as well. The participants in his project went so far as to say explicitly that "only men can be farmers" (583). Ghorayshi writes: "In general, women tend to view their primary responsibility as domestic; few consider themselves as farm operators; *and for some, to be called a farmer is like being called a man*" (emphasis mine, 583-584).

For the participants in this project, farm women are not 'naturally farmers' and their daughters do not grow up to be 'farmers.' The way for a woman to be a part of a farming operation, in their words, is to marry a 'farmer.' In other words, a man can be a 'farmer' without association with a woman, but a woman cannot be a 'farmer' without association with a man.

Susan and I had a discussion regarding the continuation of her family farm. She began by explaining that her three boys did not seem interested in taking over the farm. I asked if her daughter Sherry might consider inheriting the farm, but she doubted that Sherry would want to farm. She went on to say that if Sherry "*marries a farmer*, and if *he* really wants to live on the farm I think *she'll move there with him*" (emphasis mine, Susan Brender). Susan recognizes that her sons were capable of making autonomous decisions not to become 'farmers.' Sherry, on the other hand, would have to make this choice only if she decided to 'marry a farmer.' When discussing the younger farm women in the community Dorothy reinforces this understanding, describing some of the other women in the community as: "the younger women that are married to farmers" (Susan Brender). These women married a legitimate 'farmer,' but they are not 'farmers' in their own right.

This type of discussion was common. Carolyn notes that her daughter "married a farmer" and that marrying a farmer was "a lot of hard work" (Carolyn Wood). It seems to me that it is not 'marrying a farmer' that is the hard work, the hard work comes in 'being a farmer.' Dorothy says that she always swore she "would never marry a farmer" (Dorothy Young), reinforcing the reality that she is not a farmer in her own right, but only

in the fact that she married a legitimate 'farmer.' Even in discussing her daughters taking over the farm, Dorothy says: "But, you know, maybe Eric [her son] will when he's a little older, but he's got a lot of allergies, so I don't know if he'll be able to. And then, you know, the girls might end up with a farming boyfriend" (Dorothy Young). This way of defining 'farmer' is ironic given that Susan, Carolyn, and Dorothy were all raised on farms. These women have all been involved in farming operations for some time now, but still do not see themselves as legitimate 'farmers,' nor do they consider their daughters to have the autonomous power to be 'farmers.'

The idea of farmer as male was prevalent on the farm where I grew up as well. My mother encouraged we three girls to go to school so that we would never have to 'marry a farmer.' In many ways, at that time in my life, I already considered myself a 'farmer' of sorts. I waited for rain or an equipment failure to go out with my friends, I had made pets of the farm livestock as I spent so much time with them, and I understood the inner workings of a lot of our machinery. Yet, I also understood that I would never *really be a farmer* unless I stayed in town and married a local farm boy. My brother, on the other hand, was a 'farmer.' He was granted that title simply by being a boy.

The idea that being a 'farmer' is trait one is born with was significant in many of these interviews. Julie notes that both her husband and her son have "farming in their blood" (Julie Green). The patriarchal nature of farming compels farm women to understand a reified fact: men are real farmers and women simply help them get the job done.

5.3.4 'Farmers' Do Not Allow Poor Health to Affect Work

The participants who were experiencing declining health focused upon this limitation as a factor in their refusal of the title 'farmer.' Julie states this outright, saying: "Now that my health has declined I don't feel like a farmer. I feel like I don't qualify now" (Julie Green). Jane also points to the changes in her work as her health declines:

> "I had a stroke it would be about 15 years now. I used to do swathing and I do ride in the combine so he sets it and stuff, eh. And that's it for fieldwork. I'll get parts, and help fix, and get yelled at" (Jane Muller).

When one's abilities to do farm work decrease one loses status as a farmer.

Both Jane and Julie also refer to their husband's disbelief that they were actually sick or unable to work. Both suffer from 'invisible illnesses.' Jane suffers from extreme stress – a problem disregarded in many fields, not only farming. She tells the story of her first trip to the hospital due to stress:

> Jane: I know I was in the hospital for my 40th birthday, but that was *that stress thing. ...*
> Lisa: What did you feel like before you went in?
> Jane: I was just light headed and dizzy and weak, eh. That's when I was 40. That's when Isabella phoned me there – 'What the hell am I doing in the hospital.' *Dale didn't believe me 'what the? Stressed out, yeah, right'.*
> Lisa: So what did they do for you?
> Jane: I just relaxed, didn't worry about anything out here. Didn't get yelled at, didn't have to do nothing. I was just totally relaxed. I don't know how long I was in there. (emphasis mine, Jane Muller)

Julie describes the changes in her life after a case of sciatica. She notes that when her health declined she felt that no one believed that she was unable to do her usual farm work. Not only this, she also describes feeling that she barely even existed on the farm once she was not as useful to the operation:

> [D]uring seeding and harvest ¼ I was busy doing what I was trained to do. Too tired to even think. I turned into a robot. But as my health held me back things changed. I did the little things and heard about 'if only you would try and drive the truck.' I tried once and spent the whole day in pain. Well I sure proved I couldn't do it. One year I didn't plant a garden. Well, lazy or what. *The part I notice is if you are no longer able, you are no longer.* (emphasis mine, Julie Green).

Every day farm women are reminded that they are not legitimate 'farmers.' They are reminded at the bank, they are reminded by farm surveys, and they are reminded by their husbands who are the 'real farmers.' Jane's husband repeatedly lets her know who the real 'farmer' is on their operation:

> What I always get told is like, like you don't work for it, eh. 'It's my money I go work for it.' Just, you know that is the last thing I want to hear, eh. You don't work for it. Geez, somebody's gotta work for it around here ... You know. That sort of thing I just - that's what I hear quite, quite often, eh. (Jane Muller)

Dale underlines Jane's belief that her work on the farm is insignificant. He set her up as a second class farmer, one who does very little work on the farm itself. He tells her this "quite often." He has to be sure she does not forget.

I remember my mother's frustration when a local woman got a job doing a farm survey. The surveyor was an upper class farm woman who lived near us and she arrived at our always unkempt house to ask Mom her list of questions. The first question on the survey examined occupation. My mother said that she was a farmer. The woman replied, "No, I mean your *occupation.*" My mother seemed confused – and I was as well. My mother had just come to the house from butchering chickens and had to get done before she was needed on the field. All of this was the evidence. Of course she was a 'farmer'! But the answer did not work for the survey. My mother sighed with resignation and said

"homemaker." Being married to a 'farmer' is hard work and she did not have time to argue with this woman. What would my father have done? Would occupation 'farmer' work for the survey if he was a participant in it? Of course it would have. As a man, he definitely could be a 'farmer.'

In the next chapter I look to strategies to change this situation. Farm women's work must not be overlooked. I am not saying that farm women must adopt the term 'farmer.' Rather, I argue that the farming community must understand that the work of farm women is a major factor in the successful operation of a farm. Male farmers must understand that the farm ought to be operated as a partnership. Everyone involved in the operation is invested in its success. This thesis is intended to do more than describe the situation of farm women. It looks to change, summarized in suggestions for the future of an agrarian feminist theory. This theory must explain the oppression of farm women, but, more than this, it must look to policies for change in the status of farm women.

Chapter 6:

Future Research

This chapter outlines some areas for future research suggested by my study. These topics have been developed through this research, but they also reflect some of the problems discussed by the participants that have been left undeveloped thus far. Each of these topics have been a part of imagining an agrarian feminist theory. These include domestic violence, the loss of rural social cohesion, and intergenerational conflict on the family farm. While some of these subjects have been topics of recent interest, they all require further research and action if the rural spaces of Canada are to thrive in the future.

As a consequence of the very open-ended interview style utilized in this research project, the participants and I discussed much more than their roles on the farm. On the other hand there were also some topics that the participants were reluctant to talk about. Both of these facts stimulated my consideration of future research necessary in understanding and empowering farm women. It has also inspired some of the ideas that I address in my discussion of an emerging agrarian feminist theory.

6.1 Farm Women and Domestic Violence

> I drank with him and we fought. I believe it was because I called vodka the truth serum. I would bottle everything up and look out when I exploded. This is when I believe the abuse started. He said 'I asked for it'. I knew I was stubborn and a few drinks helped me not to back down. So yes, I believed him. I tried to talk myself into keeping my big mouth shut. But no I kept asking for it. ... I had 4 children and I believed I was stuck. So make the best of a bad situation and I believed I did. ... [A]fter he pulled a gun on me the fog cleared and at least I knew I wasn't responsible

> for his drinking. This was his choice. ... I have learned you are responsible for your own happiness. I learned not to settle. I have learned I am still weak and my self esteem hits all time lows many times. I tell him what he wants to hear. ... I still walk on egg shells, I go into deep depressions, but I have my pills to comfort me. So to all women out there, it doesn't go away it only gets worse. I wish I would have gotten counselling when I was young, but there was no where to go. We were taught to keep things hidden that were not so good. Pretend you are happy and learn to cope. I spent most of my married life on Valium, ulcer pills and anything I could take to keep me on an even keel. I took sleeping pills so I could pass the night away. I took valium so I could stay calm. Now I know this is not the answer and it doesn't solve anything. But doctors were quick to prescribe. Then you were on your way for another month or so. ... I learned it worked through my mother. (Julie Green)

Domestic violence is a serious problem for Canadian women. At this point national statistics only speak to cases that can be addressed by the justice system (eg: financial abuse is not a violation of the law and so would not be recorded), but even with this limited definition of violence against women, statistics show that 220,000 women living in a spousal relationship were victims of physical or sexual assault perpetrated by their partners in 1999 (Status of Women Canada, 10). The 1993 Violence Against Women Study found that "51% of Canadian women had experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence since the age of 16." In addition, "25% of Canadian women had experienced violence at the hands of current or past spousal partners (married of common-law) since the age of 16." All together, the study showed that 45% of women had experienced violence by men known to them (Status of Women Canada, 10).

For the purposes of this thesis I use the term 'domestic violence' in much the same way that Linda MacLeod (1987), a pioneer in Canadian study of domestic violence, uses the term 'wife battering.' She writes:

> Wife battering is the loss of dignity, control, and safety as well as the feeling of powerlessness and entrapment experienced by women who are the direct victims of **ongoing or repeated** physical, psychological, economic, sexual and/or verbal violence or who are subjected to **persistent** threats or the witnessing of such violence against their children, other relatives, friends, pet and/or cherished possessions, by their boyfriends, husbands, live-in lovers, ex-husbands or ex-lovers, whether male or female. The term 'wife battering' will also be understood to encompass the ramifications of the violence for the woman, her children, her friends and relatives, and for society as a whole. (emphasis in orginal, 16)

MacLeod's characterization of domestic violence is inclusive of a multitude of behaviours. Furthermore, this definition gives power to the use of threats as a form of domestic violence and the implications that domestic violence has for the family and friends of women living in situations of domestic violence. I do not adopt the terminology used by MacLeod as the term 'wife battering' conjures an image of a woman suffering some type of physical battering. The definition is inclusive and so I take up a term that is also very inclusive - 'domestic violence.' Still, I must concur with Ann Jones as she notes, "*Domestic violence, battering, wife beating, woman abuse* - call it what you will - is something greater than and different from what the terminology and standard syntax suggest. We must look at the thing itself - what is really going on" (87). The terminology, though important, is not as essential as an understanding of the behaviours and effects of domestic violence.

While national statistics do not distinguish between domestic violence in rural and urban areas (Canadian Farm Women's Network; Status of Women Canada 10), there is reason to believe that it is at least as prevalent in rural and farm communities as it is in urban centres (Doherty and Hornosty; MacLeod 23). Even with the small sample size

participating in this thesis project, all of the participants discussed the problem of domestic violence in their own communities. No questions addressed domestic violence directly, but the women understood this as a major problem for farm women and chose to discuss it in the interviews. Clearly these women see the need for changes in community response to the unspoken issue of domestic violence.

Domestic violence affects rural and urban women in many detrimental ways, but rural and farm women face some distinct barriers to reporting domestic violence and escaping abusive relationships (Feyen 105-106; Canadian Farm Women's Network; MacLeod 22-23). Recently these distinctions have been receiving greater amounts of research time and the attention of the Canadian government (Doherty and Hornosty; Jiwani; Canadian Farm Women's Network). This research provides us with a deeper understanding of the distinct problems associated with violence against women in rural and farm areas, but further it offers some interesting and innovative ideas for ending domestic violence on the farm.

Looking at research conducted in rural areas and reflecting on the experiences discussed by the participants in this project, I begin this section by providing a context for the distinctive nature of domestic violence in rural areas.

6.1.1 'Why doesn't she just leave?'

6.1.1.1 *Losing the Farm and Farm Life*

One of reasons that farm women often offer for not leaving abusive relationships is the understanding that the farm will likely fold or be forced into dissolution if the farm

woman leaves. A divorce would mean dividing the assets, which would require a liquidation of a great deal of the farm land and machinery. Farm women invest a large part of their labours to the success of the family farm and they fear this dissolution. As Doherty and Hornosty note:

> For farm women the family is not separate from the context of the family farm. A farm is not only one's home; it is the source of one's livelihood. Husband and wife may work side by side in the barn or in the fields. Farmers develop a special attachment to the land, and the survival of the farm often depends on an economic and intimate partnership between husband and wife.

This connection goes so far that "[f]arm women state that emotional attachments are probably one of the strongest reasons why they would not leave an abusive situation on the farm" (Canadian Farm Women's Network).

A research team from New Brunswick interviewed Atlantic Canadian farm women who had suffered domestic violence (Doherty and Hornosty). From the results of these interviews they created a composite sketch of the "common themes and insights that emerged from the dozens of interviews." Their composite of a farm woman, 'Sue' notes that she had difficulty leaving as she recognized the possible loss of the farm:

> It's hard to explain my reluctance to leave, but leaving Tom was like leaving my entire life. Farming is hard work, although I didn't mind it even when it lasted twelve or fourteen hours a day. I put all my energies into making the farm a success - without ever getting paid for doing it. How could I walk away after eighteen years - from everything I had ever known? I worked side by side with Tom bringing in the crops, haying, feeding the animals, and even helping repair some of the equipment. We weren't rich, but we made a comfortable living. A family farm like ours is a cooperative effort, and I worried it wouldn't survive without the children and me. It really drew me back.

Clearly, farming is more than a job or an economic livelihood. Doherty and Hornosty conclude: "Leaving means leaving one's roots, and doing so constitutes a far greater disruption to one's life than leaving an abusive relationship in an urban setting."

This problem is also important in the sense that farm and rural women must leave their community of friends and family in order to escape an abusive relationship. Their children often must change schools, no longer attending with their friends who have been with them since kindergarten. A survivor in Linda MacLeod's study spoke of the fear and isolation that she understands as a direct repercussion of leaving a situation of domestic violence in a rural area:

> All my friends, relatives, my whole life is at my home. It had to get so damn bad before I could decide to leave all that behind. I don't like the city. I don't know anybody. Now I can't go back. Where would I live? There aren't apartments and welfare housing on the farm. If I go back home, it has to be to him and more beatings. I don't know where to turn. (23)

Farm women suffer high levels of isolation in situations of domestic violence (Feyen 105; Jiwani; Canadian Farm Women's Network), but when they escape this isolation is only compounded.

6.1.1.2 *Economic Dependency*

While both rural and urban women may be economically dependent on their spouses, the ramifications of this dependency affect rural and farm women in distinct ways (Doherty and Hornosty; Canadian Farm Women's Network). Jiwani notes that rural areas are distinguished by a "dearth of employment opportunities, job-skills training

programs, and services for women." With few recognizable skills, a lack of transportation, and limited financial resources to start out with, farm women often 'choose' to remain in abusive relationships (Canadian Farm Women's Network).

Julie, a participant in my current research project, notes the negative impact that her economic dependency had when she made the decision to leave. She notes the control that her husband exerted through his financial power:

> I have left the farm numerous times, worked the winters but Steve [her husband] always convinced me to come back in the spring. I never received any money from him when I would go. ... He would go through my purse and remove all credit cards and cheque books and before [the time she left for nearly a year] I had $15.00 in my purse. I got a job. My drug prescription I was on cost me $200 per month. Steve made sure our bank account was maxed in case I had an extra cheque book. I can see now Steve figured if I had no money I would come back begging. ... I came back in [the spring] as ... I could not pay rent and live on a salary from a fast food shop... So I learned from that experience that if you control the money, you have the power. (Julie Green)

Clearly economic dependency and a lack of marketable skills leave farm women without many choices when it comes to escaping a violent relationship.

6.1.1.3 *Domestic Violence as a Private Matter*

In both rural and urban areas domestic violence is often understood as a private family matter - one that should be dealt with within the family itself. This is a major problem for ending violence in the home (MacLeod 22-23). Doherty and Hornosty note that the farm women they spoke to felt that the rural "ethos that 'private' matters are not of public concern" was one of the key reasons that farm women are reluctant to report domestic violence. In rural areas this problem is compounded by the general need for a greater level of privacy in an area where 'everyone knows everything.' The authors

comment: "As we learned, women are reluctant to disclose abuse when they feel the whole community will know. A common concern of abused women living in rural areas is local gossip and lack of anonymity for those seeking help." Rural and farm women are reluctant to call the police for fear that neighbours will hear over police scanners, they are afraid to park in front of social services buildings as locals will recognize their vehicle, and they are afraid to seek counselling since the people at the local clinic will recognize them and know what kind of help they are seeking. There is a relative lack of anonymity in rural communities and the fear of 'airing one's dirty laundry' is often paramount to seeking help from the community (Doherty and Hornosty; Haddon, Merritt-Gray, and Wuest 251-253; Kubik and Moore 28).

It is problematic that in a rural area where 'everyone knows everything about everyone' people can act as though they are not aware of domestic violence in their community. This facilitates a community wide normalization of domestic violence. Doherty and Hornosty report:

> [S]o many forms of abusive behaviour are not named as family violence in rural communities. ... This behaviour may be well known by neighbours and friends; however, the entire community seems to participate in blaming and using minimizing language and responses. This can act to normalize abusive behaviour and to bolster norms about the private nature of family life. ... Rural men and women who grow up witnessing or experiencing abuse in their own homes come to feel that it is normal, since others in the community seem to be minimizing or condoning it.

Ann Jones notes that when people know about abuse, but do not take action it makes the victim feel anxious and hopeless. It magnifies "her sense that she alone is responsible for her safety, that she alone is perhaps, after all, to blame" (148).

6.1.1.4 *Logistical Difficulties in Leaving*

Leaving a situation of domestic violence in rural and farm areas also creates many logistical difficulties. Victims of domestic violence may not have access to a telephone or a vehicle (Jiwani). They may be isolated in ways that make leaving nearly impossible. Furthermore, because the farm is the place of work their husbands may be better able to track their movements, making escape nearly impossible. A participant in a study conducted by Linda MacLeod noted the unique problems faced by farm women when attempting to leave:

> Farm work isn't like city work. My husband wasn't gone from eight in the morning till five at night. He could pop in at any time. He kept a close guard on the pick-up and on my comings and goings. I'd have to ask him for the keys. There was just never a safe time to leave. Once I tried keeping the kids home from school when I knew he was busy with haying. And you know he just stuck around that day even thought the haying had to be done. How could I get away? (23)

Another participant in MacLeod's study reported that her husband had various friends in the community track her activities and movements as well:

> He has a lot of friends around where we live and I come from another village, so they're not so close with me. He gets his friends to keep an eye on me. Oh, he makes it like a joke, but for me it's like being in jail. (23)

With the myriad of problems farm women face in leaving an abusive relationship it is not surprising that many wait until a particularly traumatic incident occurs before actually attempting to leave. Leaving is dangerous for any woman, but to try to leave when living in an isolated area a woman faces greater logistical problems. Two participants in Jiwani's study of abused women in rural and remote British Columbia clearly speak to the fear and danger rural women may feel in attempting to leave a

situation of domestic violence.

> Yes, I felt isolated... One, obviously, was my physical location, having no phone and being at least a quarter of a mile from the nearest neighbour. I mean, I could have screamed at the top of my lungs and nobody would have heard me. He could have killed me and thrown my body out in the chuck that night and nobody would have been there to see it.
>
> Women that live in the country, what can they do if it happens in the middle of the night, they don't have access to the phone because they have to run out of the house, where do they go. If they don't have a vehicle, there's no buses. In the city there's buses. There's more places like lanes and buildings to hide until you catch a bus and there's things that are open. Here ... everything's closed at a certain time so where do you go? Do you hide in a garbage bin? I don't know. And a lot of people are asleep. So where does a woman go for help at night?

Leaving a violent rural or farm home requires extensive planning and co-ordination. In order to be safe farm women must have both information and help.

So what sort of help can change the situation of farm women living in violent homes? The Canadian Farm Women's Network and Jiwani both offer some action oriented ideas to change the situation of rural women living in abusive situations. Outlining some of these suggestions is a call for action; the problem has been studied, but change must be implemented.

6.1.2 'How can we help?'

6.1.2.1 *Social Services, Legal Services, and Financial Aid*

An important change that needs to be implemented is an increase in education about the services available to women who are leaving an abusive relationship (Jiwani). When distributing information, service providers must be sure that they are sensitive to

the needs of the local community. Information should not be concentrated in busy farming seasons, like seeding or harvest. The educational materials must be left in places safe for rural women to access. This may include women's washrooms in rural churches, bars, or doctor's offices. These must be spaces where a woman can access the materials without the knowledge of her spouse or other community members. As the participants in Doherty and Hornosty's study point out, "there is something inherently wrong with a system whereby rural women can learn about abuse only if they travel to the city and happen to find a pamphlet at a government office."

Social services, legal aid, and financial aid should also set up a "coordinated emergency response team that could provide information about services and resources" (Jiwani). Jiwani suggests that the government "create a central agency that would be able to advise women about custody and access, maintenance payments, welfare rights, property rights, and other legal and financial rights or procedures. This should be a one-stop place where women can obtain the information and the services they require." By creating a centralized agency in charge of application and dissemination of the materials required by women attempting to leave a violent home, the process could be simplified greatly. When farm women are unaware of the services available to them, unfamiliar with the city, and lacking transportation, it can be daunting, if not completely overwhelming, to attempt to contact the multitude of programs currently available to survivors of violence (Doherty and Hornosty). A centralized agency would be a vital help to both rural and urban survivors of violence.

Furthermore, this central agency must be supplied with a toll-free crisis hot line that is widely advertised. This was a major factor noted by rural women in New Brunswick:

> Many of the women interviewed told us they could not phone the nearest transition house or other services for advice because it would show up on their telephone bill as a long-distance call. This would create suspicion and perhaps put them in danger. A toll-free number that is easy to remember and widely known would help clear this hurdle. It would also assist rural women who are seeking information and advice but want to maintain anonymity. (Doherty and Hornosty)

If the government recognizes the need to end domestic violence in rural areas and wants to see current programs fully utilized a coordinated and centralized agency for victims of domestic violence is a necessary step to helping women to escape.

6.1.2.2 *Education*

Speaking to the need for education as a tool in ending domestic violence points to two main educational needs: (1) the need for elementary and high school programs that teach children about the nature of violence and patriarchy and (2) educating the rural and farm communities about the types of family behaviours that are violent and unacceptable. The Canadian Farm Women's Network (1994) stresses the need for changes to school curriculum. As noted earlier, rural and farm youth are often raised in communities that minimize and overlook situations of domestic violence. Talking about these issues in schools, naming them as abusive behaviours, could be instrumental in facilitating a clear understanding that this behaviour is not 'normal' nor is it to be ignored. The Canadian Farm Women's Network suggests subjects including:

- non-violent problem solving
- analysis of patriarchy and link to family violence
- link between sexism and family violence
- links between chemical use/abuse and violence
- building healthy relationship, self-esteem

I would add to this list a course directed to acknowledging the social construction of gender roles. Understanding the construction and possible deconstruction of the roles assigned to men and women could be very empowering for both rural and urban children. Furthermore, these educational courses could be used as the basis for school plays and presentations in order to bring this knowledge to the larger community, educating adults about the nature and consequences of domestic violence.

Doherty and Hornosty focus on the need to educate adults about the nature and impact of abuse. Creating community understandings of the negative effects of domestic violence may encourage people to speak up in opposition to violence and to voice support for victims of violent relationships. They write:

> The women we spoke with stressed the importance of creating public messages to help people name and condemn abusive conduct. They commented that women living in abusive relationship need to be told by the people around them that violence is not acceptable and that the abuse is not their fault. This message must be pervasive, and must be reinforced in public awareness campaigns in which local communities are encouraged to take ownership of this message. It is important to target the message in such a way that family, friends, neighbours, and others in the community listen to the voices of abused women and let them know they are believed, supported and understood.

Domestic violence must be understood as it affects the community as a whole. This problem is not individual, nor is it private - it concerns everyone and must be addressed as a community concern. This may be accomplished through community sponsored

events that raise funds for women's shelters or crisis hotlines; these types of activities send a signal to the larger community - violence is not acceptable and we, as a community, will work to support victims. Community organizations may also be encouraged to write to local newspapers; these letters may address forms of domestic violence and offer suggestions for a safe escape. Rural and farm communities must be empowered and educated about ways in which they can be take part in ending domestic violence.

6.1.2.3 *The Role of Health Care Providers*

The importance of well trained health care providers in rural areas cannot be stressed enough. While victims of domestic violence may fear calling the police and find themselves in nearly complete isolation (Feyen 111; Jiwani), physical violence can impel them to seek medical attention. Health care providers may be the only people that victims can turn to in response to the violence.

Doctors and nurses must be trained in supportive responses that may enable or encourage women to leave situations of domestic violence. If women are not ready to leave, doctors must be able to work through a safety plan for women. While the rural health care system is overburdened, time must be taken to address the issues and concerns of rural women living in abusive relationships.

Farm women often speak to problems of overmedication in response to problems of stress and domestic violence (Doherty and Hornosty). Julie, a participant in the research conducted for this thesis, speaks to the ease of obtaining medication:

> I still walk on egg shells, I go into deep depressions, but I have my pills to comfort me. ... It doesn't go away it only gets worse. I wish I would have gotten counselling when I was young, but there was no where to go. We were taught to keep things hidden that were not so good. Pretend you are happy and learn to cope. I spent most of my married life on Valium, ulcer pills and anything I could take to keep me on an even keel. I took sleeping pills so I could pass the night away. I took Valium so I could stay calm. Now I know this is not the answer and it doesn't solve anything. But doctors were quick to prescribe. Then you were on your way for another month or so. Sometimes I would get a 3 month supply of Valium. I learned it worked through my mother. She was on Valium and she coped. I started off borrowing hers. (Julie Green)

In this quote Julie speaks about many of the problems already noted, including the silence, the lack of mental health workers, the learned methods of coping with violent homes, and the propensity to medicate problems that are not physical in nature. Rural health care providers must be educated in signs of domestic violence. They must be taught to respond, ask questions, and create safe spaces that encourage disclosure (Doherty and Hornosty).

In order to facilitate this education for health care providers in rural areas I suggest a document, prepared by farm women's groups and researchers, that is required reading for rural and urban health care providers. This document should outline some of the signs of domestic violence, provide a framework for discussing domestic violence, stress the importance of safety in disclosure, and address the distinct needs of rural and urban women. This document is not only vital reading for doctors, but also for nurses and hospital volunteers. The doctor's office must be a space safe from public scrutiny and gossip; it must be a space in which women can expect support and security.

This discussion of domestic violence in rural and farm areas is not a call for further research, but a call for action. Farm and rural women suffer the effects of domestic violence and the stress of remaining silent, keeping the secret. The government has funded studies (Jiwani; Canadian Farm Women's Network), but it is now time to fund action. The suggestions above are oriented to action, oriented to real change in the ways in which rural people understand domestic violence. They aim to name domestic violence as a serious problem in rural areas. The implementation of programs to change this is the next step in creating safe rural environments for future generations of female farmers.

6.2 Intergenerational Conflict

> Just the one year [we farmed with the family] and then we went farming on our own. That was not a good scene, but you don't farm with family that's for sure... (Jane Muller)

On or off the farm the family can be a place of great conflict. Family members share relationships based upon shifting roles and incompatible needs. Winnie Lem describes quite clearly the contradictions that create conflict within the family unit:

> While the ethic of reciprocity and generosity is meant to prevail among family members, implying that the household is a site of consensus, the household is also the site of profound and intense conflict. Moreover, while the bonds of kinship may invoke sentiments of mutuality and generosity, they also summon up obligation, duty, and responsibility that is enforced by the exercise of power, by the powerful over the powerless. The household therefore is also an institution based on hierarchy and dependency where members are differentiated in terms of their access to power and control over material resources. (109)

While 'power and control' are exercised in all families, the dynamics of these elements may imply different problems when found on the farm (Rosenblatt and Anderson 150-154). It seems that extended family could represent an important form of support for farm people in the agricultural crisis, but instead farm families seem to be in a continual state of conflict.

Problems of intergenerational difference seem to be set off primarily by the process of farm succession (Lem 107-110; Rosenblatt 33-35). The process of inheritance can prove fraught with economic problems, differences in farming practice, and labour disagreements. In a study of farm families that had experienced financial disaster, Rosenblatt points out the difficulties created by the lack of communication regarding the process of farm succession:

> [I]ntergenerational farm transfer can be difficult. Family members seem often to communicate poorly, too late, or not at all about the selection and training of a potential successor, about plans and expectations for the legal transfer and its timing, about expectations following the sale for the older couple to continue to be involved in the farm operation, about who will live where and when, and much else. (34)

Who will take over the farm? When will the successor farm independently? How will the successor make payments to the senior farmers? Will the parents continue to help on the farm? Will the successor take over the home quarter? These questions are often left unanswered, leaving the successor and the senior farmers with differing expectations and timelines.

Succession also causes conflict as it may not be the first choice of the future farmer. Lem's study of farm families in France found that various forms of coercion are

often used to guarantee the future of the farm. Lem looks to understand how farm families work to secure family labour to ensure the continuity of the farm. She notes that this process often requires the patriarch of the household to utilize his power, binding possible successors to the farm:

> [F]amily labor is neither routinely nor often very spontaneously surrendered to a common family project. Indeed, the 'commonness' of the common family project is often contested. Conflicts and crises regularly arise as farmers attempt to secure labor for the reproduction of the enterprise both over the short and long term. ... Various forms of capitalist calculation contour arrangements, negotiations, and strategies not only to restrict the mobility of labor securing it to the farm, but also to allow it to be freed but only within the constraints of commitment to the common family project. The limits to mobility are imposed often through the deployment of an arsenal of ideological weapons defining people's modes of conduct while enforcing values to compel family members to commit themselves to farmwork and the common family project. (108)

Lem notes that senior farmers will prevent possible male successors from attending school, give gifts of land or equipment, and begin farm training early in order to coerce children to remain on the farm. This coercion can lead to conflict and other forms of subdued anger or resentment (132-133).

Lem also found that intergenerational conflict on the farm may be a product of the overlap in the role of the family as a social and economic unit:

> Though the household is in one sense a domestic formation that functions to fulfill the requirements for the symbolic reproduction of its members, it is also an economic formation that fulfils the function of material reproduction. In this sense, it is centred around the production, consumption, redistribution, inheritance, and reproduction. As an economic unit, the household ... is rooted in the production of use-values through domestic labor as well as exchange-values in the production of items to be exchanged on the market... [A]s is the case for all family farmers, domestic relations can imply work relations. (112-113)

The family as a unit of production in the capitalist enterprise is subject to the same types of conflicts present in other work places. The household can then be "a site of conflict, hierarchy, and dependence as well as cooperation and consensus" (109). The fact that the farm, personal identity, and the family are all intricately linked (Doherty and Hornosty; Lem 112-114) causes work conflicts to also be family conflicts.

Future research in this area should look at the multiple sources of farm family conflict, but furthermore it must identify successful means of handling these conflicts. How can farm succession be handled so that it is both equitable and successful? How have some families handled succession effectively? What can farm groups do to educate farm families about the risks of working within an industry that links the world of business to the world of the family? Most importantly I would like to understand the extent to which farm family conflict is really a problem on the Canadian farm and the effect that the agricultural crisis has had on this conflict. Intergenerational conflict removes yet another source of support for already faltering farms; future research should be conducted in hopes of understanding this experience.

6.3 Rural Social Cohesion

> I think that when you get together for those work bees that you have for fall suppers and for perogie suppers at the church or even preparing for different weddings and stuff like that there's, there's a different, it's a whole different atmosphere. ... And I think that that's what a lot of our communities are losing is... you know you don't get that anymore. And especially in our small farming communities, that kind of thing was kind of like a ... a real community building aspect that we had. Where people got together and they, they shared their ideas and their values with each other. And ... because we don't do that anymore so much ... because so

> many of the farm women are busy with other jobs besides the farm, off farm jobs and they can't afford the time to go and do those kinds of things with other members of their community that we're going to lose a lot of our small communities spirit that way. You know. It's a real friendship building thing. It is. (Susan Brender)

The promotion of agribusiness, described in Chapter Four, has contributed to the decline in rural community cohesion. Recently the community deterioration caused by the farm crisis and the resulting influx of agribusiness enterprises has been the subject of much scholarly enquiry (Blake and Nurse; Diaz, Jaffe, and Stirling; Norberg-Hodge, Merrifield, and Gorelick; Epp and Whitson; Jackson), but little qualitative work has been conducted in order to understand the process by which community participants withdraw from projects important to the cohesive group. Are rural people in fact withdrawing from community participation? What can be done to encourage a renewal in community spirit in rural Canada?

In order to understand the detrimental effects of the loss of social cohesion it is important to begin with a working definition of the concept of 'social cohesion.' What does it mean for a community to be 'cohesive'? Diaz, Widdis, and Gauthier identify several indicators of social cohesion, including "strength of social relations, the existence of shared communities of interpretation, the existence of feelings of common identity and of a sense of belonging, forms of collective action, and social trust" (128). Considering the recent and ongoing farm crisis, it seems difficult that any rural community could enjoy these aspects of cohesion.

> Communities have been fractured by a proliferation of government programs, new technologies, farm lobby groups, and conflicting interests. Small farmers and acreage owners oppose developers of large confinement

> hog facilities. Organic farmers battle neighbours whose chemicals or genetically modified seeds drift onto their fields. ... Competition for shrinking profits has ... diminished community cohesion. (Harder 227)

When farmers lose land and watch their friends and neighbours buy it at auction social trust is eliminated and a 'common identity' is dissolved (Harder; Rosenblatt). When farmers begin working off the farm it leaves them little time to take part in social activities or collective action (Moser 34; Ghorayshi 578-579). Amidst all of these problems we see the rural schools, one of the last places for community gathering and common purpose, being closed down, while rural youth decide that a brighter future is to be found in urban areas. Without intervention Canadians can only expect to watch while rural communities turn into ghost towns and small farms are bought up by large corporations.

Active community organizations and sustained cooperation among farm families take on increased importance in light of declining rural populations and recent government cuts on social spending (Gertler; Lawrence, Knuttila, and Gray; Qualman). The need for women in both rural political roles and civic tasks in the face of the farm crisis is undeniable. Bokemeier and Tait write:

> A frequently mentioned lack of resources in rural communities is the lack of leadership. With women moving into decision-making roles in rural communities, a potential resource that has been untapped for the most part in rural communities can be brought to bear on new skills utilized in rural communities. It can also broaden the base of participation in rural community decision-making. (252)

Women's participation in civic roles is also essential work in the building and maintenance of rural communities. Women work in the 4-H clubs and belong to the

parent-teacher organizations, they conduct fundraising activities, and organize community social functions. As Boulding argues, community work "produces the networks which make up the women's infrastructure of mutual aid so necessary to the survival of any community" (283). What effect might the move to agribusiness and the farm crisis be having on women's roles in community building and renewal?

The women who participated in this project often described feelings of isolation from their communities and a need for greater social contact. Some noted that they felt the social hierarchy in their community discouraged them from participating in community activities, while others felt that there was just not enough time to take part in social and community projects. Time for off farm and community commitments decreases, as farmers are continually encouraged to expand production (Chapter 4).

If Canada is committed to the continued existence of the rural prairie communities, it is important to determine how and why people are motivated to build and participate in communities. Because studies have specifically documented the importance of farm women to community cohesion (Fast and Munro; Ghorayshi; Meiners and Olson), understanding motivational factors affecting farm women's social contributions is essential to the maintenance of healthy rural populations throughout Canada.

While these issues are all very important to future work with farm women, I believe that an evolving agrarian feminist theory could be a tool useful in addressing these issues. It is to that effort that I now return, beginning to articulate an agrarian feminist theory that reflects upon the words and experiences already described in this thesis.

Chapter 7:

Agrarian Feminist Theory

> Farm women make a significant contribution to the work effort, to the financial security, and to the nurturing of the family and the family farm and they do so in atmosphere devoid of support mechanisms excepting those which may occur within the family unit. Governments ignore the contribution that farm women make to agricultural production through their agricultural policies, lack of benefits and shortage of basic service infrastructure. Legal protection for farm women is vague and discrimination from lending institutions prevalent. Society in general and the feminist movement in particular have not sufficiently concerned themselves with the plight of farm women by not responding to their needs. (Koski 54)

> Well, farm women work very hard and they don't get no ... nobody says that they're very important people. 'Cause you bring up the kids and educate them and ... they really get nothing for it, that they could call their own, sorta. Don't you think so? (Carolyn Wood)

From high atop the tractor the male farmer looks out across his field. He experiences a sense of accomplishment in the clean swathes he sees behind him and imagines the future in the grain, standing tall on the stalks that lie ahead. When he climbs on the combine he begins the work of gathering the harvest, using the machine to separate the grain from the chaff, experiencing satisfaction in leaving a field after gathering all of the harvest. There is a clear sense of accomplishment in the work of a male farmer. This is not the experience of female farmers.

From the description above one can sense the accomplishment in farm work assigned to male farmers: there is a saleable end product, a sense that one has created and transformed something - from putting the seed into the ground, through to harvesting a real commercial good. Farm women are understood as the support team that aids in this

transformation, but their work never places them in a position to see the outcome of their work; they are peripheral factors in farm production. As discussed in the last chapter, they are alienated from the end product of their labours: most farm women do not drive the combine, they do not receive cheques from the sale of grain, and they do not make major decisions about farm production and sales.

Farm women are rendered an invisible and unappreciated group in the patriarchal agricultural world. The work performed by farm women is essential to the ongoing success of the farming operation, but it is often taken for granted by those in positions of power in agriculture. Agrarian feminist theory should be dedicated to the recognition of farm women's multiple roles in the agricultural operation.

The notion of a uniquely 'agrarian' feminist theory is not new (Chapter 3). Researchers such as Louise Carbert and Nettie Wiebe have both been working with these terms, articulating a theory that seriously examines the lives of farm women with a focus on feminist theory. There are also those who have been involved in this work without naming their theoretical position. Kubik and Moore write:

> The prevailing ideology of farming as a man's occupation perpetrates women's traditional role as 'farmwife,' 'helper,' or mother or daughter of the 'principal operator,' roles that enshrine women's dependence. In spite of being crucial to the survival of their enterprises, their work goes unrecognized because they do a variety of jobs daily which does not fit into any specific 'occupation.' This means the contributions of farm women are only recognized with certain limited parameters, and their work is given little public value despite their enormous contribution both to the farm and home. Often, the 'invisibility' of the work performed by farm women and the lack of recognition they receive for their work perpetrates the myth that they do not contribute to the farm or are not farmers in their own right. (25)

In this quote the authors, from the Canadian Plains Research Institute, clearly define the beginnings of an agrarian feminist theory. Farm women are an invisible but essential source of labour on the family farm. The patriarchal nature of the agricultural realm maintains the second-class status of farm women and their contributions to the farming enterprise. This is the fundamental reason that farm women receive little to no recognition for their work as legitimate farmers.

I suggest three main sources of oppression as the basis for an agrarian feminist theory. I would like to examine each of these individually, but I point out that the three are interacting and work together to maintain the second-class status of farm women.

7.1 Agrarian Feminist Theory: Sources of Oppression

This thesis points to three major sources of oppression for farm women. The first of these is the way in which the patriarchal nature of agriculture currently constructs and maintains women's position as second-class farmers.

As evidenced in Chapter Five, farm women understand the socially constructed notion of 'farmer' to be male and that they become a part of the farm only upon marriage. Almost every aspect of agriculture continues to build and preserve the idea that farm women are mere 'helpers' on the idealized 'family farm.'

Louise Carbert notes that the link between work and marriage provides precarious and imbalanced relationships between male and female farmers.

> Unlike those employed in capitalist enterprises, farm women are not remunerated in wages driven by market forces, and their working conditions are not regulated through an employment contract subject to

> legislated labour codes. Instead, the terms of employment are established through the sexual contract of marriage. ... When farm women negotiate their work relations or claims to family assets, they simultaneously negotiate the division of labour and authority through out the entire household. Because almost any occupational demand contains a latent threat to one's marriage, the unity of work and family relations might account for the marked caution of farm women's demands amid pleas to save the family farm. (xii)

To demand change is to place the family and the farm at risk. For farm women this risk may seem of greater concern than the need for legitimate farmer status. Agrarian feminist theory must address the socially constructed notion that 'farmers' are male. At the same time, it must remain sensitive to the fact that farm women expose themselves to a great deal of backlash in attempting to demand authority for their position on the farm. Despite this risk, agrarian feminist theory must work to deconstruct those agricultural notions that undermine farm women's status as autonomous and able farmers.

A second source of oppression is the fact that the patriarchal nature of agriculture is reinforced by the majority of the current research, media, and government programs aimed at helping and informing farm people. The farm women who participated in this project repeatedly related stories about the ways in which they felt that the larger rural and agricultural communities reinforced their status as second-class farmers. From the bank to the grain elevator farm women hear everyday that they do not count in agriculture. They are frequently understood as 'helpers' or 'gofers,' but rarely does the community identify a woman as a 'farmer.'

A look through farming magazine headlines (Canada Agriculture Online) illustrates the essentially male face of farming in Canada. The *Western Producer* (The

Western Producer) and *Grain News* (Canada Agriculture Online) are common farm news magazines in which women are rarely depicted in agriculturally productive activities. They may be quilting or organizing the local fall supper, but rarely is their position as legitimate farmers reinforced.

In addition to the lack of representation in the media, government programs also contribute to the idea that gender is a non-issue in the agricultural world. While there is an obvious imbalance in female and male farmers, as indicated in Chapter Four, Agriculture Canada does not provide opportunities for women to become more involved in local agricultural initiatives and programs. Recent policies implemented in Saskatchewan appear to be gender neutral (Government of Saskatchewan), but none take a stand in addressing the gender imbalance in the profession. Examining the programs initiated by agriculture Canada illustrates the ways in which the government neglects gender as an issue in agricultural policy.

Farm women also face great barriers in representation in agricultural research. While the majority of the farms in Canada are 'family farms' studies still focus on men as 'farmers' in studies. While female farmers are more often represented in present, the majority of agricultural research is still conducted with farm men. Farm women are also facing barriers in academic writing as their work is still considered less productive than the work of farm men. Parvin Ghorayshi discusses how this research limitation effectively silences farm women:

> Wives' work is ignored, underestimated or de-emphasized in research frameworks. Limited understanding of the nature of family farming, the overly narrow definition of work in such enterprises, and lack of data have

> tainted the researchers' view of women's work in agriculture. This, in turn, has contributed to farm women's invisibility. (585)

If farm women are to make make significant changes in agriculture research must represent their points of view in academic studies. Agrarian feminist theory must address the fact that government, academia, and media fail to address gender inequities in agriculture. Programs and representational mediums must reinforce women's role in agricultural production in order to promote the recognition of women as legitimate 'farmers' and to provide women a voice in the agricultural world.

A third barrier to farm women's equality is the systemic nature of patriarchal values in the agricultural domain. This has led women to internalize feelings of illegitimacy in regards to their role as real 'farmers.' This internalization leads farm women to accept the belief that they do not qualify as legitimate farmers.

If this study were statistical in nature one would say that three of the five women accepted their identity as that of a legitimate 'farmer.' It was only through discussion that these participants identified the numerous experiences that have caused them to question the legitimacy of this identity claim. Farm women may believe that they do the work of a 'farmer,' but they are also told by the agricultural world that they overestimate their agricultural abilities and authority in identifying as farmers.

Clearly the participants in this project had great difficulty in accepting the relationship between their roles on the farm and the identity category 'farmer.' This difficulty is common among farm women (Black and Brandt; Carbert; Ireland; Boulding). Fast and Munro note that on average, farm women:

> spend 634 hours annually doing farm tasks, many of which are spent working in the fields. The time they contribute to farm production on average is worth between $5,017.54 and $6,604.19, again depending on the valuation method and occupation classifications used. Women's biggest contribution in absolute terms is field work (184.2 hours), but proportionately they do a larger share of the secretarial / bookkeeping tasks (75.93 hours or 43% of all secretarial / bookkeeping work done). (143)

Despite all this work many farm women deny or downplay the idea that they could be legitimate 'farmers.' In the face of a myriad of socially and agriculturally constructed proofs that illustrate the fact that real 'farmers' are male, farm women may simply find it easier to be a 'farmer's wife.'

The socially constructed concept of 'productive work' plays a large role in creating farm women's identitities. As Cebotarev and Blacklock note: "work is still conceptualized as a dichotomy of unproductive work and 'real', productive work. 'Productive' work is that which has a direct and visible market link expressed in monetary transactions; work is defined as 'unproductive' where this link is less clear or visible" (2). Effectively redefining the notion of 'work' in an agricultural setting will be necessary in illustrating the importance and significance for farm women's work, but also for women's work in a larger sense. Agrarian feminist theory must take part in deconstructing the notion that the 'farmer' is male. Empowering farm women through this deconstruction, agrarian feminist theory could play an important role in linking the work that farm women do with the identity 'farmer.' The work of farm women is essential to the success of the family farm. Agrarian feminist theory should strive to make this fact a basic understanding in the world of agriculture.

These three points are not meant to be definitive of agrarian feminist theory, rather they are meant to encourage future research and revision by farm women and farm researchers. They represent a starting point in change for women in agriculture. While understanding the sources of oppression is an important part of agrarian feminist theory, it is also important that theory work with practice.

7.2 Agrarian Feminist Theory: Action for Change

Promoting change and activism is an important part of the interplay between feminist theory and practice. Future agrarian feminist theory may contribute to important social change in several ways including: examining the media representation of 'farmer', organizational inclusion of female farmers, rural reeducation about women roles on the farm, implementing a drive to improve rural mental health services, and approaching government regarding the implementation of rural family violence prevention initiatives. I begin by addressing the media representation of farm women.There must be an intense media drive to establish the fact that 'farmers' are female. This must be implemented in both rural and urban media outlets. Current farm advertisements, newspapers, and news programs must be questioned when they present images that perpetuate the myth that 'farmers' are essentially male.

Examining a recent copy of *The Western Producer* on-line reveals the gendered nature of the farming world (The Western Producer: March 26, 2005). The picture on the site shows two men showing and judging cattle in a Saskatchewan cattle show. The four top agricultural news stories do not mention men or women, but the quotations in the

articles only represent male farm leaders or industry specialists. The reader hears from experts such as Ward Weisensel (Chief Operating Officer of the Canadian Wheat Board) and Brian Hayward (Agricore United CEO), but not one female farm leader is mentioned. This is not just a problem in *The Western Producer*, but a trend prevalent in most farm magazines (for examples of other farm business magazines and newspapers see: Farm Business Communications). Agrarian feminists must make it a priority to protest such lack of representation in farming magazines and newspapers. Making farm news writers and editorial boards aware of the bias in reporting must be a continual point of contention. Writing to editors, contributing to newspapers, and representing the multiple roles and activities of farm women must be central to creating public awareness of the importance of farm women's work.

Second, farming organizations and government programs must be urged to include female farmers on their governing boards. Agrarian feminists must encourage all organizations to examine their internal structure to ensure that farmers of many different backgrounds are represented equally. We must lobby the government to ensure that government programs employ women on the boards. Furthermore, the government should be asked to create farm programs that address the gender inequities in the agricultural community.

A review of rural programs recently initiated by the Saskatchewan government recently (Government of Saskatchewan) reveals an indifference to the role that gender plays in the agricultural world. First of all, none of the most recent programs focus on gender in any significant way. Gender is treated as a non-issue in Canadian agriculture.

Having established the role of patriarchy in agriculture, it seems that the government should recognize and address obvious gender inequities through federal agricultural programs.

Not only does the government ignore gender in their multitude of agricultural programs, but it also fails to represent female farmers on directorial boards of existing programs. For example, a recent initiative of the Saskatchewan government is the Action Committee on the Rural Economy (ACRE). The goal of ACRE is to create "a network of strong, dynamic rural communities all across Saskatchewan - communities that can grow and prosper through sustainable rural economic development" (Government of Saskatchewan). The committee is described as consisting of "representative stakeholders involved in rural development, who are committed to working with rural interest groups, producer associations, agribusiness, government, universities and other relevant stakeholder groups to identify opportunities for government action to strengthen the rural economy" (Government of Saskatchewan). If this committee is charged with representing rural interest groups and stakeholders it would seem that farm women should be part of their membership. There is a male and a female chair of the committee, but that is where women's representation drops off. The first sub-committee, Crown Land, consists of twelve men and no women; the second sub-committee, Infrastructure, consists of nine men and one woman. This trend continues throughout the group (Government of Saskatchewan). How are women's issues and interests to be addressed when there are so few farm women on the board of directors? This lack of representation is not only evident in the ACRE program, but in many of the programs recently initiated by the

Saskatchewan government (to examine other programs see: Government of Saskatchewan).

If government cannot accept the need for female representation in farming how can farm groups be expected to react? While the practice of including at least a few women on directorial boards has been adopted by most farm agencies, the representation is still rarely equal. Furthermore, when women are represented it is often in lower rankings or in administrative or merely supportive roles. In fact, most farm groups tend to create women's 'sections.' This practice reinforces the notion that men are the real 'farmers,' while women exist as a type of support system. The very progressive National Farmers Union has a male national president and vice-president. They then have the 'Women of the National Farmers Union,' an arm consisting of a female president and vice-president. While it is upsetting to see the secondary nature of the Women of the National Farmers Union, it is even more disturbing to see that the group is perpetuating the lack of female representation through their youth representatives; of these representatives four of five are male (National Farmers Union, NFU Home). This lack of representation can be very frustrating for farm women attempting to take part in political and social change in the agricultural community. A participant in Ghorayshi's research expressed her frustration in working with farm groups: "Quand j'assiste a des reunions, on s'attend a ce que je serve le cafe au lieu de prendre part aux debats politiques et au processus de la prise des decisions" (579). When farm women are understood as legitimate farmers their opinions will be understood as an important voice in these farm groups. Agrarian feminists must protest the lack of female representation in farm groups

and government programs. Furthermore, we should be involved in encouraging government to create programs that encourage women to take part in primary agricultural production. Educational programs offered by Agriculture Canada should support women in entering agriculture. When women are represented as important players in the world of agriculture, their position as legitimate 'farmers' will be clearly defined both socially and professionally. This must be the work of agrarian feminists.

Third, I argue that rural schools must implement some form of feminist oriented education in the curriculum. This should include Social Studies curriculum that reinforces the fact that women are legitimate farmers. Agrarian feminists have to work to deconstruct the notion of farmer as male; it is important that the next generation of farmers are raised and educated to recognize the legitimacy of women in agriculture. Agrarian feminists should work to create and encourage the implementation of curriculum that acknowledges the abilities of female farmers. Introducing this type of curriculum early in the educational process would support the deconstruction of gender roles and encourage young farm women to remain in the agricultural sector. This type of education could be fundamental to teaching farm children, both girls and boys, self-esteem and respect for the work of farm women.

Fourth, I stress that farm women must have access to mental health services. These services must be delivered in such a manner as to ensure confidentiality. Furthermore, Health Canada must attempt to maintain mental health workers in rural areas so that farm women can establish an on-going relationship with a counsellor trained in the unique circumstances of female farmers.

The need for confidentiality and consistency in the provision of rural health services, both physical and mental, has been established in this thesis. Participants in this project noted the lack of reliable counsellors as a significant obstacle in attempts to make healthy choices in the face of physical and mental abuse. Participants also noted that when admitted to the hospital they were treated for physical ailments, but that the service providers rarely attempted to access the root of the problems. There are serious problems in the distribution of mental health drugs (anti-depressants) for farm women. This problem could be addressed through a consistent relationship with a health care professional educated to understand the unique circumstances of farm people.

Agrarian feminists must work with health service providers to ensure that farm women can feel confident in attempts to access health and wellness information. The government should be encouraged to create incentive programs for health practitioners, encouraging them to remain in rural areas for extended periods of time. Establishing a long-term relationship with a single health care provider is important in creating a relationship of trust and encouraging discussion of personal health problems. Agrarian feminism must be adamant in focusing the need for mental and physical health as a central issue in the rights of female farmers.

In addition to these recommendations, theremust be governmental investment in the safety of farm women. Violence is a factor in many farm women's lives. This must be recognized and programs must be put in place to address the unique problems faced by farm women who are attempting to leave a violent relationship.

Farm women face an array of problems in attempting to leave violent relationships. Agrarian feminist theory must work to encourage government to implement the changes suggested by research involved in understanding and resolving the problems of domestic violence in rural areas (Feyen; Jiwani; Canadian Farm Women's Network; MacLeod). Only through support and education will farm women gain the self-confidence and information necessary to successfully leave violent relationships. Agrarian feminism must position this basic need as a central issue.

7.3 Conclusion

Gaining support for agrarian feminism will not be easy. The women I interviewed for this study often revealed a certain degree of aversion to feminist projects. I believe that this resistance is, to some extent, due to the fact that farm women often feel that they are not represented in feminist theories or research. Furthermore, farm women have a great deal to lose in opposing the current patriarchal construction of agriculture , especially given the current crisis in agriculture. This is the challenge of agrarian feminist theory; this is the challenge to farm women. We can fight for the needs of the farm without giving up the need for respect for the work of farm women. Feminism can be a part of this fight. It can support farm women who work together to redefine their position on the farm and in the rural community.

In fact, the true beginnings of a redefinition of 'farmer' must begin with farm women claiming the importance of their work on the farm. Farm women play a vital role in the process of production and in the reproduction of daily life on the farm. Until this

role is recognized, farm women will not be understood as legitimate farmers. Both in rural and urban societies there must be a genuine redefinition of the term 'farmer.' That will not only change society's understanding of food production, it will facilitate a renewed respect for farm women and support pride in the work of Canada's rural women.

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APPENDIX A:

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

1. Title of Research - Redefining Farming: Saskatchewan Farm Women's Work

2. Name of Researcher: Lisa M. Faye

3. Purpose of Study
The aim of this study is to explore farm women's work. Primarily, I am attempting to create a new understanding of farm women's relationship to their work as I attempt to understand the ways in which farm women value that work.

4. Expectations of Participants
If you agree to participate in this study, I will interview you individually about your feelings about farm work, off-farm work, child care, and domestic work. I would also like to observe the daily operations of the farm. Furthermore, you will be invited to engage in group discussions with other farm women in regards to farm women and work. Finally, you will be asked to keep a time-inventory diary. If you wish to take part in the entire study, I would welcome any contribution you would be willing to provide.

5. Confidentiality
I will be the only person with access to the information provided by participants in this study. All names and identifying information will be changed if requested by the participants. Pseudonyms will be the only names referred to in the data and in the final research paper. The interviews will be confidential and every effort will be made to protect your identity. I will be transcribing the interviews myself. Neither your name nor the names of those you mention will appear on transcripts. Audio tapes, transcripts, and hand-written notes will be stored in a locked file cabinet during the research process. Audio tapes of interviews will be erased and destroyed upon approval of the thesis, unless you give written consent to donate the audio tape to the Saskatchewan Women's Agricultural Network library. My supervisors may see sections of the transcripts but any information that may identify you or the people you mention will be deleted from what they may read. The thesis based on this study will be given to the Queen Elizabeth II Library at Memorial University and material from the thesis may be presented at conferences and/or published in an article and/or book format. The results of this study may also inform a documentary film. Transcripts and hand-written notes will be destroyed four years after the thesis is approved, which will allow time to prepare results for possible conference presentations and/or publication.

I would like to point out the difficulties in maintaining anonymity in a rural area. This is not something that I can guarantee, but I can say that I will not reveal your identities myself.

6. Withdrawing From The Study
You are free to withdraw from the study at any time. At any time you can refuse to answer any questions, end an interview, withdraw from the study altogether or modify comments to a previous question. You may withdraw your written consent at any time by simply calling, writing, or e-mailing either myself or one of my supervisors at the given addresses and numbers below.

It is very important that you understand that you may refuse to answer questions at any time. Please feel free to stop the interview at any time as well.

7. Please sign both copies of the consent form in ink and remove one copy to place in your personal records.

8. This project was approved by the Research Ethics Committee, Memorial University of Newfoundland. If participants have any questions or concerns about their rights or treatment as research participants they may contact the Chair of the Ethics Committee by e-mail: research.ethics@mun.ca

9. Any questions regarding procedures, goals, or outcomes of this study can be directed towards:

Lisa Faye
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A
(
e .com

OR

Lisa Faye

Dr. Marilyn Porter
Department of Sociology
Memorial University of Newfoundland
Arts 3087
(709) 739-7982
e-mail: mporter@mun.ca

Dr. Diane Tye
Department of Folklore
Memorial University
A1B 3X8
(708) 737-4457
E-mail: dtye@mun.ca

I _____ (research participant) understand and agree to the terms of this study and consent to participate in this study. In particular:

I give Lisa permission to audio tape personal interviews	YES	NO
I give Lisa permission to observe and participate in the farm setting	YES	NO
I will participate in group discussions that will be facilitated and audio recorded by Lisa	YES	NO
I give Lisa permission to donate the audio tapes to the Saskatchewan Women's Agricultural Network library	YES	NO
I consent to the results of this study being distributed in thesis, conference paper, published article book format and/or a documentary film	YES	NO
I would like Lisa to provide me with a draft of the report prior to submission	YES	NO
I would like Lisa to provide me with a copy of the final report	YES	NO

Participant's signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX B:

INTRODUCTORY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is your name? Age? Married? If applicable, husbands name and age.

2. Do you have children? Names and ages.

3. Can you describe the farming operation that you are involved in?

4. What are some of your duties on the farm? Can you tell me more about each of these responsibilities?

5. Are you content with your current lifestyle? Why or why not?

6. How do you manage issues of child-care (if applicable) during busy farming seasons?

7. Do you hold an off-farm job? If so, describe the job. If not, would you like to? Why or why not?

8. How much responsibility do you take in regards to housework? Do you enjoy this work? Why or why not?

9. How much responsibility does your husband take in regards to housework?

10. If applicable, how much responsibility do your children take in regards to housework?

11. Are you involved in any community activities, committees, or fundraising efforts? Can you tell me about these?

12. Do you consider yourself a farmer? Why or why not?

13. Do you feel that farm women's contributions are valued within the farming community? Why or why not?

APPENDIX C:

TIME MANAGEMENT DIARY

EARLY MORNING 6 AM - 11 AM			
ACTIVITIES	TIME	WERE YOU DOING ANYTHING ELSE AT THE SAME TIME? (ex. watching children while making breakfast)	COMMENTS

AFTERNOON 11 AM - 4 PM			
ACTIVITY	TIME	WERE YOU DOING ANYTHING ELSE AT THE SAME TIME? (ex. watching children while making breakfast)	COMMENTS

EVENING **4 PM - 9 PM** ACTIVITY	TIME	WERE YOU DOING ANYTHING ELSE AT THE SAME TIME? (ex. watching children while making breakfast)	COMMENTS

LATE-NIGHT 10 PM - 6 AM			
ACTIVITY	TIME	WERE YOU DOING ANYTHING ELSE AT THE SAME TIME? (ex. watching children while making breakfast)	COMMENTS

APPENDIX D:

LIST OF RESOURCES FOR PARTICIPANTS

Farm Stress Line
1-800-667-4442
8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Monday to Friday and holidays
there is no call display
we respect confidentiality

We are peer counsellors, men and women from the farm, trained to assist people in crisis, taking calls from rural people on personal and family issues, financial situations and other concerns affecting the farm operation.

http://www.agr.gov.sk.ca/docs/Econ_Farm_Man/human/farmstressline04.asp

Canadian Rural Information Service (CRIS)
Phone: 1-888-757-8725
Fax: 1-800-884-9899
E-mail: cris@.agr.gc.ca
Internet: http://www.rural.gc.ca/cris
Address: 1341 Baseline Road, Tower 7, 6th Floor
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0C5
8:15am to 4:30pm
Monday to Friday

The Canadian Rural Information Service (CRIS), a clearinghouse for information relevant to rural Canada. The service meets the needs of a diverse group of clients including rural residents, community organizations and groups, rural businesses, rural practitioners, and government and educational institutions.

http://www.agr.gov.sk.ca/apps/human_serv/structure/display.asp?id=953

Department of Community Resources and Employment (DCRE)
Phone: (306) 787-7010
Fax: (306) 787-0925
Address: 1920 Broad Street
Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 3V6
8:00am to 5:00pm
Monday to Friday

Department of Community Resources and Employment (DCRE) provides:

- adoption and post adoption services
- child protection services
- family support and protective services for families
- services to foster children
- single parent support services

These services primarily are delivered through regional offices. The Department also provides assistance to victims of family violence. A variety of family shelters, counselling and support services are provided through a number of non-governmental organizations funded by Department of Community Resources and Employment.

http://www.agr.gov.sk.ca/apps/human_serv/structure/display2.asp?id=1378