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MAR 20 1996

# CWAEA

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## NEWSLETTER OF THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN IN AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS WINTER ISSUE 1996

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## Notes from the Chair

Maureen Kilkenny, Iowa State University



Dear CWAE Members and  
Newsletter recipients,

This article traditionally reports on the CWAE annual meeting and presents plans for the coming year. Instead, I'll concentrate only on what's coming up.

CWAE member **Alicia Failde** prepared a count of the participation rates of women in the 1995 AAEA Annual meetings. Women represented 22% of those involved in Free Sessions, 18% in Principal Paper Sessions, 17% of posters, and 15% of both Organized Symposia and Selected Paper sessions. Overall, women represented about 16% (138 individuals) of those *involved* with the meeting program. This proportion just exceeds our proportion in the profession (13% of AAEA members indicate they are women).

A separate article shares my record of the highlights of our annual CWAE Business Meeting in Indianapolis this past August. Included in those minutes are some items for CWAE Board action about which you may be concerned. I invite all CWAE members to contact me with ideas and suggestions.

And now for what's coming up. My theme for CWAE this year is team playing. This theme encompasses two professional strategies: first, be the best in your field. Second, be accountable to others, and, count on them. Don't wait for an offer of a helping hand, give one. The great women economists are highly cited for their original ideas. But important ideas can languish in journals if they are not developed, disseminated, cited, and ultimately influential. CWAE can help disseminate and expand the influence of your professional work. It can also provide positive externalities and the opportunities that support women who can develop great ideas.

Your team, however, is not only CWAE. It is your department, division, cohort/class, or whatever, at your institution. And, it's still a fact of life that most teammates are a different gender. Share your ideas and the work with your colleagues, regardless. Once I heard that "the problem with women professionals is that they need more team sport experiences to learn the benefits of teamwork." Personally, I worry about that about as little as I worry about having a Midwestern farm background to be a Ph.D. in agricultural economics.

The point is: subjectivity is neither required nor appropriate in science. And the same goes for professionalism. Childhood

experiences notwithstanding, we work at generating professional synergies because that is what makes our department or section successful. Examples of the benefits of professional synergy include: a colleague recruits you for a "Principal Paper" published in the AJAE; your graduate advisee is hired in a good job; with a telephone call you get a state-of-the-art analysis of a pressing issue on a moment's notice; you're invited to present your latest research at another department's seminar series; and so on. You can think of many other examples.

In that spirit, here are a few things that CWAE will do this year. One is to organize Principal Papers and Symposia for the coming AAEA meetings. As **Mary Ahearn** said, a fundamental 'professional activity' of CWAE has been to aggressively promote women in the profession. CWAE can help you organize sessions at the 1997 meetings. Another is to get women's names, addresses, and telephone numbers back in front of potential employers, organizers of departmental and tenure review committees, editorial boards, etc. I would like to publish a current Directory of Women in Agricultural Economics this year. There hasn't been one distributed since 1988.

A third is to establish a formal international presence. The USA is hosting the next conference of the (IAAE) International Association of Agricultural Economists, in California in 1997. Our own **Nicole Ballenger** is a US official representative to the IAAE. **Laurian Unnevehr** and **Nicole** are brainstorming about a CWAE reception and program to connect with our colleagues from around the world.

Two things that individuals can do for the IAAE meetings are: (1) seek out colleagues in another country to co-author a paper &/or organize a Discussion Group; and (2) organize a "home coming" for women alumna from your institution or graduate school. You could raise internal funds for international alumna to attend the IAAE meetings on the basis that they will visit their alma mater and help renew your department's international ties. CWAE will help you do this.

Other international opportunities are exemplified by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). One, the first Sylvia Lane Mentor Fellow was hosted by **Dr. Agnes Quisimbing** at IFPRI. Letter from **Florence Tangka** next this issue.) IFPRI has also announced interest in developing formal programs to employ graduate research fellows. With **Meyra Mendoza's** help, CWAE will pursue this opportunity.

CWAE is actively embracing graduate students this year. **Dawn Thilmany** is obtaining lists of women in the graduate programs across the country. They will be included in the new Directory of Women in Agricultural Economics to enhance



their visibility as they enter the job market. This directory of women (who may not yet be members of the AAEA/CWAE) will be of service to all, especially grad students entering the job market, and institutions with job openings, etc. **Dawn's** suggestion to send free copies of the CWAE Newsletter to graduate students was approved at the CWAE Business meeting. Grads will also receive a flyer describing CWAE which can be used to join AAEA/CWAE officially.

Also, the CWAENET on-line network managed by **Stephanie Mercier** and **Ann Vandeman** is an active forum used by both graduate students and professionals. See the article on CWAENET for more information.

And how about Local CWAE events? Spontaneity and initiative are all it takes. In Washington, D.C., women economists held gatherings where research was presented and great contacts were made. My fellow CWAE members diligently invited every woman economist in town for these events. When I was in graduate school at the University of Minnesota, we declared ourselves a graduate student chapter of CWAE and held brown bag lunch seminars with guest

speakers. Any and all such spontaneous activities are encouraged! Your CWAE Board is behind you. Share your enthusiasm by sending a note reporting your event to Newsletter editor **Janet Perry**.

**Mary Marchant** and **Ann Vandeman** organized a dedicated break-out session for the "Department Chairs" meeting. **Ann** made a presentation based on the "Gender and Workplace Diversity: New Rules for a New Workplace" (see CWAE, Fall, 1995). That was the successful preconference **Ann** organized at the 1994 AAEA annual meetings. Interested in organizing a preconference for 1997? Send your ideas to me. We can leverage your ideas with the help of the CWAE Professional Activities subcommittee. **Annette Citzler** and the Professional Activities subcommittee are focusing on post-tenure reviews and measuring teaching effectiveness. And **Joyce Hall-Krause** and her colleagues on the "Tracking" project are forging ahead with their major project.

If you've got an idea or time, or a problem to share, please don't hesitate to get in touch with any of us:

#### Minutes of the Annual CWAE Board Meetings

CWAE held its annual board meeting on Monday, August 7 during the annual AAEA meetings in Indianapolis. Twenty-four persons attended the meeting, including the entire 1995-96 board and AAEA Board representative **Dan Bromley**. We began with applause for Newsletter Editor **Janet Perry**, and a note to verify that department chairs were on the CWAE Newsletter mailing list. Then, **Stephanie Mercier** reported on CWAENET. She noted that it has a facility for making course syllabi available on-line and encourages members to use it. We also discussed a 'home page' for CWAE, the posting of job announcements, and intermittent re-posting of how to subscribe.

**Joyce Hall-Krause** reported on the "Tracking Survey of Women and Minorities." The AAEA Foundation Board has promised funding for five years, for the office costs, etc., of two surveys. **Julie Caswell** also brought congratulations to **Joyce** and her committee from the AAEA Foundation Board for their excellent proposal. **Joyce** reminded everyone that a free session was to be held, the next day, on the Tracking proposal. All were encouraged to participate.

**Laurian Unnevehr** (as Finance Officer) reported that CWAE has a budgetary surplus to carry-over into the 1995-6 year from the past few years. We discussed two projects. **Dawn Thilmann** suggested that we mail CWAE Newsletters to graduate students free of charge as one way to introduce them to CWAE and to welcome their participation. The other was a new CWAE Directory. We discussed tactics to reach graduate students. In particular, discussed getting CWAE materials to the directors of graduate studies at each university in time for graduate student orientations.

**Maureen Kilkenny** reported on the Sylvia Lane Mentor Fellowship program. The committee had prepared an application, conducted a competition of over two dozen inquiries and half a dozen finalists. And the first mentor fellow, **Florence Tangka** (Univ. of Florida) was in Washington, D.C. at that moment. About four thousand dollars of new donations were received, with more corporate fundraising planned. **Judy Stallmann** was welcomed as the incoming chair of the Lane fundraising, with **Helen Jensen** chairing the fellowship announcement/ application/selection processes.

**Maureen** proposed 2-year terms for CWAE chairpersons (to begin with the next elections) to allow for greater continuity and competence in the role. For example, CSWEP chairs serve for three years. **Ann Vandeman** (1993-4 chair) had also proposed it, and many of the past chairs in attendance agreed. Various ideas pro and con were voiced, and were thought-provoking. We decided to devote an issue of the CWAE Newsletter to an open discussion after which the current CWAE Board would formally consider amending the CWAE Working Rules through a board vote.

**Mary Marchant** reported on opportunities to disseminate the 1994 preconference materials "Gender and Workplace Diversity: New Rules for a New Workplace," put on by **Ann Vandeman** at the San Diego meetings. **Mary** is approaching the organizers of the Department Chair's meetings, to be held in November, about dedicating a break-out session to the topic, to be led by **Ann Vandeman**.

We also discussed a variety of "membership" topics, such as the need for systematic promotion of women, especially those new to their professional roles, at the meetings and in the profession; what graduate students' needed, and how to serve on CWAE committees.

Respectfully, **Maureen Kilkenny**, CWAE chair, Submitted September 29, 1995

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**MEYRA MENDOZA** will chair elections this year. A ballot will appear in the Spring issue of the newsletter. If you would like to run for office, contact Meyra at the above address. It is likely that this year's elections will be for the next TWO-YEAR term chair, but the board has not voted on that yet.

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#### **Lane Fund Update** *Judith Stallmann Texas A&M*

This is a draft of a proposal that we have sent to the AAEA Foundation Board about how the Sylvia Lane Mentor Fellowship (SLMF) program could be managed. At issue is how to have an active fellowship program, even though the endowment does not yet generate sufficient interest earnings.

CWAE's objective in establishing the Sylvia Lane Mentor Fellowship Fund has been to conduct a pro-active project to *"help women ... find mentors while increasing relevant and innovative research output."* In particular, the funds *"will allow young scholars... to relocate for a portion of a year in order to conduct research at another institution."*

The Lane Fund currently has a principal of over \$25,000. It annually generates 6% interest earnings (\$1,500) through the AAEA Foundation. The cost for a person to relocate for one month is \$2-3,000. Current SLMF interest earnings fall short of typical current mentor fellowship needs. Furthermore, the SLMF will not grow if there is no incentive to continue to raise funds. And as costs rise over time, interest earnings on the original endowment alone will be insufficient for any significant projects. To be able to provide mentor fellowships right now, we need to be able to channel newly raised funds to them.

If allowed by the AAEA Foundation, CWAE could follow this sequence: first raise a minimum of \$4000 (for example) earmarked for "current fellowships," and then announce a fellowship competition. To insure timely processing of applications, the original guidelines as stated in the fund's charter should be followed: *"the selection committee will include the chair of the Sylvia Lane Fellowship Fund, the chair of CWAE, and a member of the AAEA Foundation Board."*

CWAE's fundraising/fellowship award cycle need not be annual. It is too much to ask a SLMF chair who starts serving in August to raise \$4,000 in just two or three months so that a competition could be concluded within nine months. The Fellowship Fund chair should not have to worry about a "time limit" on their fundraising efforts. Also, the SLFF chair should be able (but not required) to oversee a complete fundraising/award cycle regardless of how many months (12, 18, 24, 36...) it takes.

Furthermore, if the timing is right, interest earnings would be used for SLFF mentor fellowships. CWAE will adhere to any date/deadlines set by the AAEA Foundation for requesting funding out of the Sylvia Lane Special Purpose Fund's interest earnings. If by the time the Foundations's annual funding decisions are made there is no request from CWAE/SLFF, the interest earnings should be ploughed back into the Lane Fund. CWAE requests that such interest earnings be explicitly accounted for in reports of the principal in the Lane fund each fiscal or reporting period.

This proposal is being considered by the AAEA Foundation Board and the CWAE 1995-6 Board. If approved, we will put the plan into operation as soon as allowed. Your ideas and suggestions are welcome.



## Happy Birthday to CWAENET!

Stephanie Mercier, ERS

January 25, 1996 marked the one-year anniversary of CWAENET, and we are pleased to report that CWAENET appears to be thriving. As we prepare to blow out the single candle on our virtual birthday cake, we are 170 members strong, from all over our profession, and immodestly speaking, I think we are doing pretty well.



Let's look at where we come from--out of 170 members, 106 sign on from land-grant universities, and 22 work for the Economic Research Service. Twelve members are from non-land-grant colleges and universities in the United States, seven are from government agencies other than ERS, seven hail from foreign-based institutions, five work at non-governmental organizations like IFPRI or the World Bank, and we were unable to identify institutional affiliations of 11 list members (largely due to their having a commercial e-mail address).

From the best we can tell, there are at least 16 men signed onto this list, making up about 10 percent of the membership. Based on names and e-mail addresses alone, it is difficult to ascertain whether a list member from a university is faculty or graduate student, but the agricultural economics departments at the University of Illinois, Michigan State, Purdue, and Wisconsin in particular seem to have done a good job of bringing female graduate students on-board. These four departments alone boast 41 list members in total.

Over the last year, we have had rousing exchanges about the juggling of career and family, how to get off on the right foot when looking for a new job or commencing the tenure chase, and mentoring or lack of it that female faculty members receive in agricultural economics departments. Thanks to **Janet Perry** of ERS and members from individual departments and agencies, we have early access to position announcements in our field.

As we hoped, this list has served as a discussion forum for issues of interest to us as women and as agricultural economists. Some AAEA- or CWAE-related activities have been sparked on this discussion list. Interchanges last fall led to two separate proposals for invited paper sessions for the 1996 AAEA meetings in San Antonio, and one of them was accepted. Notice of various sessions on the future of the Association held at the 1995 meetings was given on this list,

and CWAE members were key participants in the introduction of thought-provoking ideas during those sessions.

As we begin our second year, we put forward a couple of questions to CWAENET members. What can we do that would make CWAENET even more productive for women agricultural economists? Can CWAENET be used as a serious research tool? Ann and I enjoyed putting this electronic meeting place together, but it is up to all list members to make it work.

To become part of the net, send an E-Mail message to: [LISTSERV@ERS.BITNET](mailto:LISTSERV@ERS.BITNET) There should be no subject line in the heading. The note should say: SUBSCRIBE CWAENET <your name here> **Stephanie** and **Ann** will take it from there. Thanks again for participating!

## Women You Should Know

This edition of the newsletter highlights the accomplishments of two women at Economic Research Service, **Mary Ahearn** and **Stephanie Mercier**. Both are well known to the profession and to CWAE in particular.



First, from **Stephanie**, who is the leader of the Trade Policy and Programs team in the Trade Analysis Branch of the Commercial Agriculture Division:

I was an Economics major for my undergraduate studies, at Washington University in St. Louis. I was accepted at four universities out of high school (Cornell, Wellesley, Iowa State, and Wash. U), and picked Wash. U. because they offered me a full-ride scholarship. At the age of 18, I was contemplating either law school or graduate school in Economics. The realization that law school would pile up thousands of dollars of debt by the age of 25, while one could get support in graduate school, tipped the scales.

I went to Iowa State University for graduate school beginning in 1983, and did not stop for a Master's degree. At this point, I was ready to go home (I had grown up in Ames, Iowa), and Iowa State offered the caliber of program I wanted. Since my parents both teach at Iowa State, my family knew several members of the Economics Dept. before I even started my program, so I was quite comfortable in that environment. After serving as a teaching assistant for one semester, I switched to a research assistantship with **Wally Huffman**. I had known Wally and his wife since I was about ten years old, and I was

interested in his research area, which was interactions of human capital and agriculture. My major areas at Iowa State were agricultural policy and econometrics, with a minor in statistics. My doctoral dissertation concerned the adoption of computers by farmers.

The Ph.D. job market, especially in academia, was rather thin in the late 1980's, and most of my solid prospects were with government agencies. Finally, in Jan. 1988, it came down to a choice between the Economic Research Service and the Central Intelligence Agency. I chose the former because I wanted to have a chance to talk to my colleagues openly and didn't want to have to explain to everybody that I wasn't a spy. I have never regretted that decision, although like many new ERS employees, I believed that I would only work here for 2-3 years before moving on.

At ERS, most economists are hired to work as either researchers or situation and outlook analysts. Nobody told me that there was anything in between those two roles, but that is what I have ended up doing. Initially, I worked as a researcher on feed grain issues, but gradually I discovered that my true comparative advantage lay in being a jack of all trades, or cross-commodity analysis, as it is called at ERS. Once I had established a solid foundation of expertise in domestic agricultural policy, I shifted my focus slightly to work on trade liberalization issues. From there I was drawn into a related set of issues under the umbrella name of grain quality. Now, I call myself a synthesist (or generalist) on domestic and trade policy issues having to do with the grains and oilseed sector. Basically, I am called upon to analyze issues in a variety of subject areas, frequently on a very short turnaround, drawing on both my own knowledge and that of ERS colleagues. All in all, the work has been very rewarding.

**Mary Ahearn** is Chief of the Environmental Indicators and Resource Accounting Branch of the Natural Resources and Environment Division. Here's her story:

Our newsletter editor has asked me to write about work life in ERS and the critical decision junctures in my career that brought me to and kept me at ERS. Upon reflection, there have been five major decision junctures in my career. The first was the decision to major in Food and Resource Economics at the University of Florida. I was looking for a profession that would allow me to support myself, offer adventure, and offer me the opportunity to contribute to solving some of society's problems. (I grew up in Fort Lauderdale, so mingling with the other students with farm backgrounds offered a certain kind of adventure.) At the time, the UF offered undergraduates the option to specialize in natural resources and the environment, and that was another draw for me. I'm sure I benefitted from the required courses

in physical and biological sciences. As I moved toward graduation, I don't remember giving any thought to my future.

One day a visiting professor from Penn State asked me to join their M.S. program. Living in Pennsylvania sounded like an adventure, so I went. (I was misled, too. He said the weather was great. To a Floridian who had never seen snow, Pennsylvania winters are not a great thing.) One of the most beneficial aspects of the Penn State program from my point of view was the combination of Ag Econ and Rural Soc in one department. I took as many Rural Soc classes as Econ or Ag Econ during that period and wrote my thesis in a rural development area.

I remember one of the Ph.D. students studying for prelims at Penn State comparing the Ph.D. program to fighting in Viet Nam--in fact, at the moment, he thought the Ph.D. program experience was worse. Shortly after, when my major professor said one of his colleagues at another institution was offering me a Ph.D. assistantship, I was sure I wasn't interested.

I came to ERS in 1978 upon completion of my M.S. degree from Penn State. I was also offered a job in my native Florida with a state agency, but opted to come to ERS for 1, or maybe 2, years for the Washington, D.C. experience. It is still shocking to me that I have been here for 18 years! I clearly remember calling up a professor from Penn State after a year's time at ERS and asking him if he thought if staying for another year in the Federal government, meant I would get "sucked into" the system for ever. He assured me he thought I had control over my life.

After two years in ERS, I realized I was suited for research, but that I needed the advanced training, both human capital and credential aspects, of a Ph.D. to continue. Oregon State had three important characteristics I was looking for: a strong environmental program, a strong rural development program (the Western Rural Development Center is co-located with the department), and a high quality of life community. The administrator of ERS at the time approved my transfer to OSU as an ERS employee, and a non-traditional schedule to accommodate classes. I had a quirky arrangement at the time that I would not recommend to anyone: I was an ERS employee with a supervisor on the other side of the continent holding me accountable for a full work load, was both a student and an adjunct faculty member in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, and was located at the Western Rural Development Center.

I considered not returning to ERS. I soon realized that I did, indeed, want to return simply because I was attracted to the policy relevance of the agenda. The continuation of a



compelling agenda plus the flexibility of certain aspects of the work environment have kept me at ERS.

For example, ERS has some flexible workplace rules regarding leave or work at home for child bearing and infant care. (With my first child, I returned to work after 1 month, which in retrospect was too soon. After several months at home with my second child, I took advantage of an ERS policy and worked at home part-time for about 6 months.) And, as is often mentioned, Washington, D.C. has some advantages for dual career personal situations (my husband is also employed at ERS). And, especially important to me, ERS offers opportunities for changing positions with very low transaction costs, compared to other employment options. In addition to those types of flexibility, ERS offers a rich research environment because of the staff expertise and information resources available. I took advantage of this flexibility when I returned from Oregon and found, as is usual, a new organizational structure.

It was a critical time to make a job change within ERS. I decided that, despite having a Ph.D. in agricultural economics, I knew little about the agricultural sector, and furthermore addressing the issues that I personally find most compelling, required a sound basis in agricultural sector performance and structure. My next series of jobs in ERS (from 1983 to 1992) involved contributing to the ERS mission to provide the basic economic intelligence on the performance and structure of the ag sector and to establish research programs in the areas of agricultural household behavior, the size distribution of personal income in agriculture, and improved economic accounting, both conceptual and empirical, for the ag sector.

Beginning in 1992, I served about 1 1/2 years as an Assistant in the Office of the Administrator. My duties there varied as the priorities and the Administrator--there were three within that short period--changed, but they included providing reviews of manuscripts and representing the Administrator's Office on internal and external committees, and managing a project to determine user views of research priorities for agricultural economics. My current position at ERS is the Chief of the Environmental Indicators and Resource Accounting Branch. The branch is one of seventeen branches which compose the four program divisions of ERS. The branch has 28 staff, 22 of whom are economists conducting research and analysis on issues related broadly to the economics of the environmental impacts of agricultural production practices and policies.

*Life at ERS.* From my perspective during my time at ERS, ERS always had a clearly different agenda than did university departments. That agenda is focused on the end product of delivering public policy relevant information to our customers in the Administration, on the Hill, and elsewhere. In order to

deliver a high quality product, a sound research and data program is critical.

It usually takes new Ph.D.s a year or two to figure out the differences in the work environment between ERS and their training ground. In fact, when some figure it out, they leave.

Although ERS was ever evolving (for example, elimination of all field staff) from 1978-1993, it also had a significant amount of stability from the individual researcher's level. Since 1993, change has been steady and swift at ERS at all levels, and I expect it will continue. In 1993, ERS received a 25% budget cut. That budget cut has caused us to be more accountable to our important customers. Now, it is a relief, after 3 years, to have a "permanent" rather than acting administrator. More importantly, our new administrator, **Susan Offutt**, is known to be a savvy and decisive leader. Another significant change factor for ERS is our organizational move within USDA to the cluster of agencies focussed on research.

*Involvement in AAEA.* I have thoroughly enjoyed my association with AAEA. I benefit professionally from the exchange of views and approaches to analysis with a more diverse group of agricultural economists. I also enjoy the lack of structure and the informality that is part of the AAEA culture. I have always found ways for my AAEA activities to contribute to meeting my responsibilities at ERS.

For example, I had responsibility for the USDA cost of production estimates during the same year that I was chair of the AAEA Economic Statistics Committee. During that year I organized a conference on standardizing costs and returns methods and helped establish the current national AAEA taskforce on standardization.

This is my third year of service on the AAEA Board and I have continued to be impressed at the willingness of the leadership to be responsive to change and concerns of agricultural economists, members or not. I have also been impressed at the expert service members provide through committees and our annual meetings to the benefit of us all and, ultimately, society in general through our research, analysis, teaching, and outreach activities.

I joined CWAE, formerly COWOP, at the time it was established and have since served on numerous committees, including the newsletter editor (along with Joy Harwood), on the Board, and as Chair. I have felt at home with CWAE, years before I felt at home with AAEA. Over the years, I have received a lot of personal revitalization from my CWAE connections, and thanks to CWAENET, can now do so efficiently and on a continuous basis.



**Congratulations to Susan Offut, who was  
appointed Administrator of USDA's  
Economic Research Service!!**

### **Graduate Student Column: Back to School**

*Terese Wells, University of Illinois*

An e-mail I got from my mother today highlighted what I think of as the oddity of my being in the Midwest, "What is a nice girl like you doing in a blizzard?" I sometimes ask myself the same question. I am a 33 year old single parent. I moved to Illinois last year to pursue my Masters degree in Ag. Econ. at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign, leaving behind a solid career and comfortable paycheck, in search of some higher accomplishments in life. I moved from Washington state where I had been in the seafood industry for 13 years, the last 6 in salmon farming.

Several years ago I participated in the Washington Agriculture and Forestry Leadership Program where I learned about the multitude of issues facing US agriculture. After this 2 year leadership training experience, I wanted to become involved in agriculture at a national level, but realized that more education was needed. I also feel that it is important in our rapidly changing world to seek growth, skill enhancement and education. While my job/career was secure and paid well, I felt the need to up-grade my toolbox.

I am not a typical student: I never finished high school--I got a GED at 16, and was in my mid-twenties when I did my bachelor's degree in Economics. Although my GRE test scores were not the highest (I have never been good at math), 3 of the 4 schools I applied to accepted me. I choose the U of I because of their Food and Agribusiness Management program. Industry is where I come from, and it is most likely where I will end up. I received no fellowship offers, but the U of I seemed confident that I could land an assistantship once I got there.

Last summer I moved with my 2 daughters (ages 14 and 6). I did get an assistantship that covers tuition and rent, but I still needed student loans to make it. My advisor and most of the professors here have been extremely helpful and genuinely caring. I also find support among my classmates, but because I am older and a single parent there are limits to how much we have in common.

The transition to a full-time student fall semester was hard. At times I felt I had no where to turn, no support system-- just kids to feed, papers to grade, and a report to be done. Unlike my undergraduate experience where I felt I could turn to professors for encouragement, I now feel unable to turn to my professors for moral support because expectations are so much higher, and a poor impression could affect future funding. Thankfully, I have made two close friends who are also single Moms. Without their friendship and support, fall semester could have been a disaster.

I am now working on a research project involving the development of a US-Mexico Soybean Internet homepage to be presented at the IAMA conference in May. My research and thesis work will likely continue in the area of strategic planning and marketing, utilizing electronic communication resources such as the Internet. I am particularly interested in electronic communication because of the implications in business for women with children. Although my hard research skills are a bit rusty, my understanding of industry and "the real world" are valuable tools.

Going back to graduate school has been difficult, but it can be done. Tools like a home computer, e-mail, and the Internet are even more valuable to a single parent. I don't know where I will work when I graduate, but I feel that my graduate education on top of years of industry experience will lead to many opportunities in the future. But for now, I need to fix a bowl of cereal for the kindergartner, and I think there is another blizzard outside.

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Please send notes, articles and information for possible inclusion in the newsletter. Include information about career changes, advancements, publications and awards. CWAE is printed for subscribers 3 times a year. An electronic version will be posted on CWAENET. The approximate schedule is:

Issue	Due	Published
Spring	Apr 26	May 20
Summer (electronic issue)	Jun 16	July 20
Fall	Sep 25	Oct 20

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### **An Elusive Goal**

*Janet Perry, ERS*

When I started my graduate work in 1978, women were just beginning to be visible in the ranks of agricultural economists. My department at New Mexico State University had no women on the faculty, but there were quite a few in the department as

students. The 1970s had brought women into many academic fields, and agricultural economics was no exception.

In 1971, an informal women's caucus got a series of resolutions passed at The American Economics Association Meeting by proposing them unexpectedly and stacking the meeting with supporters. As part of those resolutions, the AEA set up the Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession (CSWEP), the counterpart to our own CWAE which was established in 1980.

Since that time, women have made great inroads in economics and agricultural economics. Far more women are represented at each level of the professions. Salary differentials between the sexes have fallen. More women are becoming tenured (see list of tenured women in the Fall 1995 issue).

Although social and legal pressures now make blatant discrimination less likely than in the past, subtle barriers and biases are still with us. Two studies have recently addressed gender equity issues relevant to our situations. The first is by Shulamit Kahn, assistant professor of Economics at Boston University School of Management; the second by Gerhard Sonnert, who is an associate in the Harvard University Physics department.

Kahn writes in the Fall 1995 issue of the *Journal of Economic Perspectives* on the growth in the proportion of new Ph.D.s in economics awarded to women. Her work reports on a joint effort of CSWEP and the Economics Program of the National Science Foundation to encourage and financially support research in this area.

Despite growth, the number of degrees awarded in economics is still lower than in other social sciences, and is even lower than in other scientific and engineering fields. In 1993, 23% of economics Ph.D.s were earned by females, compared with 37% in social science and 30% in science and engineering. Her survey shows that female representation in the economics profession drops at many junctures: choice of undergraduate majors, enrollment in graduate departments, completion of Ph.D.s, hiring into academia, promotion to tenured positions, and promotion to full professorships. Only 4 percent of full professors in economics are female (Ethridge reports that 6% of agricultural economics faculty are women, and fewer are full professors).

A larger proportion of women drop out of Ph.D. economics programs than men. At present, it is not known if the dropout rate is related to any qualifications differences at admission. While Kahn indicates that fewer women in economics are going to the most prestigious Ph.D.-granting institutions, a CWAE study in 1990 found that 50% of all women Ph.D.

students attend the top 10 schools (Zepeda, Marchant and Chang, 1994).

A smaller proportion of "newly minted" female Ph.D.s are entering academia than are male Ph.D.s; more women than men take non-tenured jobs and more take positions at liberal arts colleges. Women economists also have lower starting salaries. However, when controlling for department characteristics and the applicant's background, Kahn found that differences in first jobs disappear.

Women published less than men, even after controlling for experience, age, coauthorship, and publication quality. However, when considering the rank of the employing institution, or the person's degree-granting institution, women have the same or higher rates of publication. This lower publication rate has not been found to be related to differences in tenure. Kahn concludes with the gloomy prediction of a declining proportion of female Ph.D.s in economics.

Sonnert's study appeared in the Winter 1995-96 issue of *Issues in Science and Technology* and concentrated on women in the sciences, but some findings are pertinent to this discussion. Sonnert also found that women have fewer publications than men (an average of 2.3 publications per year compared with 2.8). The men and women interviewed reported gender differences in professional style. Women's professional conduct was often perceived as less careerist and self-promoting than men's. Women tended to create their own area of expertise rather than competing with other researchers in a race to the solution of a "hot" problem. The women in the study reported lower estimation of self-confidence, ambition and related traits than the men did. Other subtle barriers to women's career progress included interactions between family and career that delayed or way-laid goals that women had.

Although legal safeguards are still needed, they are of little use in combating subtle discrimination. Instead, Sonnert emphasizes the increasing importance of socialization. Students and those beginning their careers need to be aware of the social factors that determine career outcomes. Women in all disciplines would benefit from more conferences, seminars and workshops on explicit strategies that lead to successful careers. These meetings would have the advantage of offering help to men as well.

Other suggestions from Sonnert's article include increasing men's awareness of gender issues and making clear that subtle exclusion of women from informal social groups have clear effects on their careers. Changes in the working environment such as explicit, formal communication about expectations, decision-making and evaluations rather than relying on informal mentoring would go a long way to helping women's



careers. Policies such as slowing down the tenure clock can alleviate the hardships brought about by pregnancy, childbirth and infant care. Raising a family is more than a personal whim, it is a useful contribution to society. And, policies to accommodate two-career couples such as split appointments, sabbatical positions, or transitional income would create more opportunities for women.

Programs that focus attention and create opportunities for visibility should be encouraged. This has the added advantage of giving less experienced women role-models and possible mentors. Institutions can award fellowships to broaden the experience of women and make them more visible. Finally,

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employers should use quality instead of quantity of publications in evaluating past performance.

While a quick fix to gender disparities is unlikely, diversity and flexibility in policy initiatives could go a long way to expose all the budding and active scientists to different opportunities, increasing the chances that economists will find one he or she can take advantage of. The recommendations of these two articles support the aims of CWAE: to participate in furthering the careers of women, and to actively engage both men and women to make the discipline of agricultural economics more hospitable to everyone.

Ethridge, Don (1994). "Women and African American Agricultural Economists in Academia: An Overview," in *Achieving Diversity*, by Mary Marchant and Handy Williamson, Jr., NY:Garland Publishing, Inc.

Kahn, Shulamit (1995). "Women in the Economics Profession," in *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Volume 9, Number 4, Fall 1995:193-205.

Sonnert, Gerhard (1996). "Gender Equity in Science: Still an Elusive Goal," in *Issues in Science and Technology*, Winter 1995-6:53-58.

Zepeda, Lydia, Mary A. Marchant and Hui-Shung Chang (1994). "Agricultural Economists in Academia: A Focus on Women," in *Achieving Diversity*, by Mary Marchant and Handy Williamson, Jr., NY:Garland Publishing, Inc.



**16TH ANNUAL NATIONAL  
RURAL FAMILIES  
CONFERENCE**  
"Changing Realities of Working  
with Children and Families"  
September 25-27, 1996

Presentations for the 16th Annual National Rural Families Conference should be submitted by March 22, 1996. The theme of the conference is "Changing Realities of Working with Children and Families." It will be held in the Student Union on the Kansas State University campus in Manhattan, Kansas. Presentation proposals may include the following formats:

- ▶ Concurrent sessions provide a 50 minute presentation by a single presenter or co-presenter.
- ▶ Round table discussions are brief presentations lasting no more than 10 minutes on innovative ideas, and programs, followed by 50 minutes of discussion with the audience.
- ▶ Poster sessions (50 min.) designed to provide an opportunity for a professional to present his or her area of interest. The audience circulates on an individual basis for informal discussions with poster presenters about their work.

Suggested presentation topics include:

- ▶ Public policy and welfare reform
- ▶ Violence and the sources of societal violence
- ▶ Parenting
- ▶ Health care for rural America
- ▶ Intergenerational family issues
- ▶ New technologies/innovative program delivery
- ▶ Strengthening and preserving families

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### **Job Announcements**

Cornell University, Department of Agricultural, Resource, and Managerial Economics College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Cornell University: **Assistant Professor**, business management, a tenure track position, with an initial three-year appointment on a 12-month basis. Starting Date: 1 July 1996. The effort allocation for this position is 60% teaching and 40% research. The incumbent is expected to teach two undergraduate courses in business management, one of which



may be large, and to advise undergraduates. The incumbent is expected to obtain external funding to help support his/her programs, to supervise graduate students' research, and perhaps to teach graduate-level courses. The incumbent will have flexibility in identifying specific research topics, but his/her program should build on and complement the Department's existing applied economics and management programs in marketing, cooperatives, food industry, agribusiness, and small business management. The individual should be interested in collaborating with colleagues, especially in relating research results to management problems and issues. Qualifications: A Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics, Economics, Management, or a closely related discipline is required. Teaching, advising, and/or research experience is an advantage. An enthusiastic interest in teaching and in research related to business management is expected. Submit a letter of application, vita, transcripts, and names of three references. If available, evidence of teaching and research activity should also be submitted.

Materials should be sent by 15 March 1996 to:

Dr. Andrew Novakovic, Chair, Department of Agricultural, Resource, and Managerial Economics, 102 Warren Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853-7801 SALARY: Competitive salary and an attractive fringe benefits package. AA/EOE

**Project manager & economist** - Positions available with an int'l economic and management firm, who provides technical and research services to government agencies, int'l financial institutions and commercial clients worldwide. Requires: US citizenship; Master's Degree in economics, 5 years experience in developing countries working with women in development issues, managerial skills, demonstrate ability to advise & develop programs. Send Resume to WIDSR, 1629 K Street, NW, Suite 800, Washington, DC 20006. Fax: 202-296-4884. EOE. Listed 2/08/96.

Note: CWAE reserves the right to condense, or not publish, announcements because of timing or space constraints. A list of women members of the AAEEA is available, for a small charge, from Lona Christoffers at the AAEEA Business Office ((515) 294-8700) for those employers who wish to do direct mailing.

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