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GENDER DIMENSION AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN CYPRUS

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ABSTRACT – Employment in the agricultural sector recorded a marginal decrease in 2002 compared to 2001. This decrease is attributed to the reduction in some crop products and consequently the decreased demand for labour for agricultural activities. The share of employment in agriculture in relation to the total labour force was 6,9% in 2002, compared to 7,1% in 2001, 7,4% in 2000 and 8,0% in 1998. Women have traditionally played an important role in agriculture in Cyprus where most farms are family run. In general, women do not participate in decision-making related to farm production activities. Only a few women (8.3%) decided themselves on farm improvements such as the buying of machinery. Even fewer were those deciding on crop cultivation and on-farm investments.

Although women constitute 15% of the economically active population and about half of them are employed in rural economy, "farming is still regarded as a man's world". Men remain the chief beneficiaries of productions aid from structural funds. This clearly demonstrates a need to support and raise women's profile in the decision-making process. "Gender equality must be put at the center of rural development policy worldwide". This means supporting policies that promote the role of women in the economy, and reducing the level of female unemployment in rural areas. Despite many measures already being put in place to create additional work in rural tourism, processing and marketing of rural products, and in connection with the introduction of rural technologies, this remains a significant problem. Further efforts are also needed to provide the necessary training in these skills. Recently, particular emphasis was given on gender issues and the contribution of women in Agriculture. The ARI in cooperation with the EU organized an International Conference on "The New Challenge of Womens' Role in Rural Europe" in October 2001 and a European Conference on 'Women and Sustainable Rural Development in Europe' in June 2004. Recommendations and concluding remarks of the two Conferences will be discussed in this paper.

AGRICULTURE IN CYPRUS

The agricultural sector exhibited an increase in 2002 compared to the previous year. This is attributed to the favourable weather conditions, which resulted in the increase of the volume of the crop production, mainly for cereals and groundnuts that increased by 11,3%. The value of livestock production maintained the upward trend of recent years, with an increase of 3,2% for 2002.

The total gross output of the broad agricultural sector increased by 0,3% at current prices and reached £376,4 mn. in 2002 compared to £375,2 mn. in 2001. In real terms, gross output increased by 3,1 % compared to the 8,0% decrease recorded for 2001. In real terms, crop production increased by 6,5%, livestock production recorded an increase of 3,9%, and ancillary production increased by 0,3%, while forestry production and the hunting sub-sector recorded decrease of 7,8% and 53%, respectively (Agricultural Statistics, 2002).

Employment in the Agricultural Sector

Employment in the agricultural sector recorded a marginal decrease to 23.000 persons in 2002 compared to 23.400 in 2001. This decrease is attributed to the reduction in some crop products and consequently the decreased demand for labour for agricultural activities. The share of employment in agriculture in relation to the total labour force was 6,9% in 2002, compared to 7,1% in 2001, 7,4% in 2000 and 8,0% in 1998 (Agricultural Statistics, 2002).

Crop Production

Crop Production experienced an increase both in volume and value terms. The volume increased by an overall 6,4%. The total value of production rose to £183,9 mn. In 2002 from £182,8 mn in 2001, recording a slight increase of 0,6%.

Cultivable Areas

The total Agricultural land covers an area of about 200.000 hectares (Agricultural Statistics 2001). From these 92.300 hectares represent temporary crops (46,5%) and 41.300 hectares permanent crops (20,8%). The remaining 55.400 hectares represent fallow, uncultivated, grazing, forest and scrub or deserted land with 5%, 24%, 1% and 3% respectively (Table 1). From 1985 to 2001, the Agricultural land decreased by 6% mainly due to urban development.

Table 1. Agricultural land, 2001

Land use	Irrigable area (*1000 hectares)	Total area (*1000 hectares)
Crop area	35,2	133,6
Temporary crops	19,2	92,3
Cereals	4	56
Legumes	0,5	0,8
Industrial Crops	0,5	0,5
Fodder crops	4,5	25,3
Vegetables and melons	9,7	9,7
Permanent Crops	16	41,3
Vines	2,5	18,2
Citrus	5,4	5,4
Fresh fruit	3,6	3,6
Nuts	1,2	3,9
Olives and carobs	3,3	10,2
Fallow land	1,5	9,5
Grazing land	0	1
Uncultivated land	1,5	47,8
Scrub and deserted land	0	6,6
Total	38,2	198,5

Source: Agricultural Statistics, Series II, Report No 33, Statistical Service.

Types of Crops Cultivated

The main temporary crops were cereals with 61% of the total area under temporary crops, followed by fodder crops with 27,4% and vegetables with 10,5%. The main permanent crops are grapes with 44,1% of the total area under permanent crops, followed by olives and carobs with 24,5%, citrus with 13,1%, nuts with 9,4% and fruits with 8,7%.

Irrigated land accounts 38.200 hectares or 19,2% of the total area enumerated. Of this 51% was irrigated from water pumped from boreholes, 39,2% from dams, 6,3% from rivers and 3,5% from springs.

Irrigated Crops (Permanent, Annual)

The percentage of water demand for permanent and annual crop is 59% and 41%, respectively. This accounts 95,8 MCM/year and 65,5 MCM/year.

From 35.200 hectares of irrigated crops, 19.200 refer to temporary crops, while 16.000 refer to permanent crops. The main irrigated temporary crops were vegetable and melons with 27,6%, followed by fodder crops with 12,8% and cereals with 11,4%. The main irrigated permanent crops were citrus with 15,3% followed by fresh fruits with 10,2%, olives and carobs with 9,4% and Vines with 7,1%.

WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

Women have traditionally played an important role in agriculture in Cyprus where farms for the most part are family run (Table 2). Labor provided by family members accounts for 80% of the total compared with 93% in EU-15 in 1997. Women are involved principally in the growing of field crops and livestock rearing. Women working in agriculture made up 3% of the working population of the country. The female workforce, whether made up of family members or employees, represented over a third of the total population working on farms (Chart 1 and Table 3).

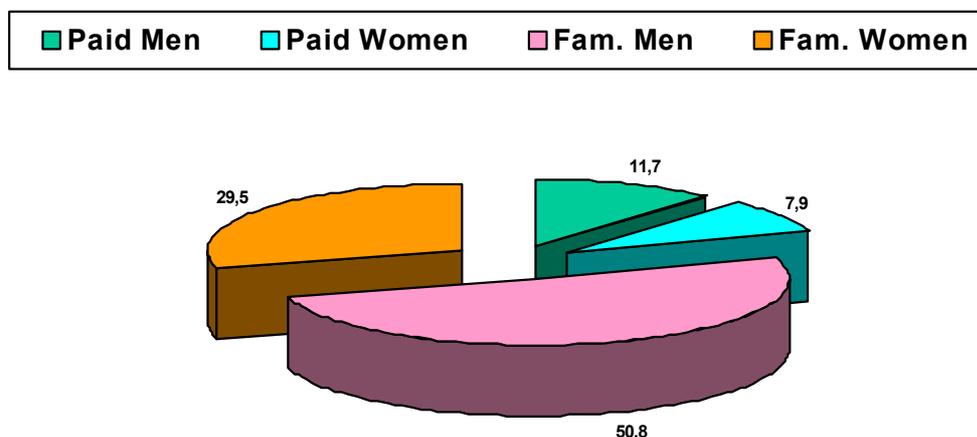


Fig. 1. Distribution of paid and family labor in Cyprus (number of persons)

The family farm is the typical production unit in Cypriot agriculture, with the farm family being the main agricultural labor source. Out of a total number of 27,552 (Agricultural Statistics, 2001) engaged in agriculture (8.9 percent of the total economically active population), 77.5% were farmers or members of the farm family (Census of Population, 2001). Rural women account for 16.5% of the total population and constitute substantial and integral part of the country's labour force. They account for 15% of the total female or 6% of national labor force (Aristotelous, 1994).

Table 2: Employment in the broad agricultural sector, 2001-2002

Sub-Sector	Number of persons					
	2001			2002		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
Crop production	10.390	6.320	16.710	10.250	6.232	16.482
Holders and family members	8.990	4.932	13.922	8.870	4.872	13.742
Employees	1.400	1.388	2.788	1.380	1.360	2.740
Livestock production	3.967	2.300	6.267	3.935	2.162	6.097
Holders and family members	2.717	1.873	4.590	2.700	1.755	4.455
Employees	1.250	427	1.677	1.235	407	1.642
Forestry	333	90	423	340	81	421
Holders and family members	53	30	83	55	26	81
Employees	280	60	340	285	55	340
TOTAL	14.690	8.710	23.400	14.525	8.475	23.000
Holders and family members	11.760	6.835	18.595	11.625	6.653	18.278
Employees	2.930	1.875	4.805	2.900	1.822	4.722

Table 3. Employment in agriculture by category, sex and sub-sector, 1997-2002

Sub-Sector	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Crop and livestock production	24.590	24.440	23.928	23.533	22.977	22.579
Holders and family members	19.932	19.670	19.218	18.967	18.512	18.197
Males	12.596	12.437	12.150	11.996	11.707	11.504
Females	7.336	7.233	7.068	6.971	6.805	6.693
Employees	4.658	4.770	4.710	4.566	4.465	4.382
Males	2.750	2.845	2.813	2.707	2.650	2.595
Females	1.908	1.925	1.897	1.859	1.815	1.787
Forestry	440	446	426	433	423	421
Holders and family members	85	86	82	84	83	81
Males	55	57	54	54	53	55
Females	30	29	28	30	30	26
Employees	355	360	344	349	340	340
Males	299	302	284	288	280	285
Females	56	58	60	61	60	55
Total	25.030	24.886	24.354	23.966	23.400	23.000
Holders and family members	20.017	19.756	19.300	19.051	18.595	18.278
Males	12.651	12.494	12.204	12.050	11.760	11.559
Females	7.366	7.262	7.096	7.001	6.835	6.719
Employees	5.013	5.130	5.054	4.915	4.805	4.722
Males	3.049	3.147	3.097	2.995	2.930	2.880
Females	1.964	1.983	1.957	1.920	1.875	1.842

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE FAMILY FARM OF THE MOUNTAIN REGION

The Mountain zone extends over the higher slopes of the Troodos massif. It comprises 66 communities with a total population of 18529 or 3.2% of the country's population (Census of Agriculture, 1994). This population, however, is constantly declining. About 5,500 small size agricultural holdings operate in the zone with a total cultivated land of around 12,000 ha.

Despite women's important contribution to family farming and rural life, their work is generally undervalued. Usually, in using the concept of labor for statistical purposes, the significant portion of women's work necessary for housekeeping, household maintenance and children's care is ignored. Even female labors used for a wide variety of tasks in the sphere of production is neglected, not recognized or merely considered 'complementary' to male family members work.

The major objective of a recent study was to present an empirical analysis of the position of women in the rural society and their contribution to agricultural activities in the mountain region of Cyprus (Antoniades and Papayiannis, 2001).

Detailed analysis of the type of women's off-farm job showed that 43.8% are employed in the private or public sector as workers, 34.4% are self-employed in other occupation and 21.9% civil servants or employees in semi-governmental organization. Off-farm employment was closely linked to age. Younger women are more likely to have an off-farm job. Thus, 45% of those below 44 years have off-farm jobs, compared to 8.2% of those over 63 years. Definitely, younger women have higher education, therefore increased opportunities to choose their own labors situation. Another 'push factor' is the decreasing income from farming which 'forces' women to seek off-farm employment in order to contribute to the income of the farm house-hold (Efstratoglou, 1990). However, attitudes of the new generation towards work as well as personal and economic independence should not be neglected. Significant differences do exist between the type off-farm jobs and age of respondents. Almost 64% of the unspecialized workers in private or public sector are over 63 years old as against 14.3% of women under 44 years. Half of the respondents stated that their income earned from off-farm jobs is partly used for supporting their family income, and part of that is kept for the satisfactory of own personal needs.

Regarding women's motivation for off-farm work, farm-women assigned the highest importance to financial motives. These motives should not be looked at as independent from the need for social approval and recognition, which, in turn, increases their self worth and personal fulfillment (Efstratoglou, 1999). Indeed, 53.8% of the women with off-farm job believe that by having their own income they secure economic independence. The remainder considered that by choosing to have an off-farm job they ensure for themselves better work conditions and personal satisfaction while strengthening of the family income was reported as another major reason, mainly by the group of housewives. The lack of off-farm job opportunities in the study area was indicated as the main constraint for not having off-farm job by 45.8% of the women working mainly on the farm and by 35.1% the housewives. Age and lack of qualifications were some other constraints underlined mainly by women working on the farm (Antoniades and Papayiannis, 2001).

INVOLVEMENT OF WOMEN AND TYPE OF FARM ACTIVITY

In general, women do not participate in decision-making related to farm production activities. Only a few women (8.3%) decided themselves on farm improvements such as the buying of machinery. Even fewer were those deciding on crop cultivation and on-farm investments. However, 40.0 percent of them stated that have equal responsibility in the management of the farm budget. A possible explanation is that budget decisions are treated as a major issue that concerns the entire family. Therefore, decisions have to be made more collectively, whereas less important decisions are usually made by the male head of the farm. In the case of women who run the farm and the household themselves, all decisions were made by them.

The involvement of women in the farm operations was closely related to the farm size. Women operating on bigger size farms had much greater participation in carrying out the various farm operations than those operating on smaller size farms.

Women are involved in farm operations, mainly harvesting, rather than in farm administration or management, with no significant regional differences in this respect. Further analysis of the data showed that the willingness of rural women to undertake field- work was associated with age, with younger women rejecting or ready to abandon it. About 58% of the respondents under 44 years old are not involved in field- work as against 13.6% of those over 63 years. Younger women in all regions were more willing to get involved in farm administrative/management tasks.

The vast majority (89.3 percent) of the respondents were running some kind of non-agricultural enterprise, with only minor differences among regions. As regards the type of women's non-agricultural enterprise, 62.6% have developed cottage agro-industries, 29.0% handicraft and 8.4% agro-tourism activities. Almost 84% stated that they were entirely responsible for the management of these enterprises. For the remaining 16% the responsibility lies with their husbands or children. These kind of activities involve the professionalization of occupations in the informal economy with which women have always been engaged and through which have played an important part in establishing heterogeneity in European agriculture and the conservation of the cultural heritage, which modernization has today eroded to an incredible degree. Women have considerable ability in converting these local resources into marketable commodities, as well as facility in building interpersonal relationships and professionalizing the role of the housewife.

They have an anthropocentric approach to country life and are more sensitive than men to issues of diet and environment (Fonter et al., 1994). On the other hand, the professionalization of these occupations contributes to change in the structure of relations and transforms the women of the household from an unpaid accessory into co-manager of the family business (Bock, 1994).

The existence and running of non-agricultural enterprises was affected by the farm size. Rural women on smaller size farms run non-agricultural enterprise at a higher percentage compared to those on larger farms. Naturally, women farming of small area have lower farm income and by developing parallel to farming activities aim to earn supplementary income. The motives of rural women for the development and management of small businesses was related to family financing but also, to a lesser extent, to personal or professional fulfillment (Antoniades and Papayiannis, 2001).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study (Antoniades and Papayiannis, 2001), some policy considerations that may improve women's position in the family farm and promote their integration into the rural society of the mountain region include:

- Improvement of the professional and social status of women by providing them with individual entitlements to income through taxation incentives and to social security schemes.
- Establishment of associations networks for farmwomen to improve their representation in rural development and in decision-making. Networks are required for better communication, share of information, advice and guide inter- and intra regionally.
- Representation at the decision-making levels so as to break their social exclusion.
- Acceptance of women's participation in the planning processes for local development programs and initiative actions.
- Restructuring of the vocational training in the rural areas to incorporate courses, advice and information on market oriented skills, relevant to women response to labor demand on farm work and off-farm activities.
- Shift of agricultural training from the traditional form of home economics to farming techniques, production of new products (cut flowers, pot plants, dry flowers, organic farming), farm management, farm administration, investments, planning and other important for the rural life actions.

ANALYSIS OF THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN CYPRUS

The status of women in Cyprus, according to the CEDAW Report of 4.5.1995, is comparable to their status in other Mediterranean countries (Spain, Portugal, Italy).

Although equality of opportunity for women is fully guaranteed by legislation, in reality here, too, there are factors (patriarchal structure of the family, relatively small and closed society) which prevent full participation of Cypriot women in the economic and social life of the country.

During the last 20 years, great mobility has been observed in society; as a result, women have become more active in education and work.

Women's participation in decision-making and fiscal policy-making appears to be lower than men's. According to 1991 data, out of a total of 262 government positions, only 22 were held by women. The same low rate of senior positions held by women can also be seen in other sectors of the economy and in women's participation in public life. As elsewhere, this phenomenon can be traced to the preconception that a woman's role as wife and mother is more important, as well as to women's lack of free time due to their family commitments.

The same phenomenon can be seen in employment. Women constitute 15% of the economically active population; about half of them are employed in the rural economy. Women are employed in all types of agricultural jobs, and in some of them they have important competencies and responsibilities. It is important to note that the agricultural sector accounts for 7.5% of GDP, and constitutes a significant part of the Cypriot economy. Although there is no discrimination as regards women's participation in associations, cooperatives or access to financing, their working conditions are problematic. For example, they work long hours, have no leave, and, most important, receive no social insurance benefits, since there is no insurance coverage for the majority of agricultural jobs.

In other sectors of activity, there are many regulations against discrimination, but again full equality is not ensured. Thus, in the private sector especially, there is indirect or hidden discrimination and gender stereotypes with regard to recruitment, promotion, wages, etc. In the public and broader public sector, such discrimination is negligible.

In addition, the principle of equal pay for work of equal value is not applied in certain sectors of activity, a fact that can be seen in many branch agreements.

As concerns the level of education in Cyprus, it is generally high among both men and women, who participate on an equal footing at all levels. The illiteracy rate is now almost zero, because basic education has been compulsory and free since 1960. Some problems still exist among female agricultural workers and elderly women.

Careers education in Cyprus is of very high quality, but again there are many instances where girls choose occupations traditionally considered appropriate for women (e.g. teacher, nurse, secretary, etc.). The number of women pursuing a technical education is also very low compared to the number of men.

PRESENT SITUATION AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Gender equality constitutes a prerequisite for social development and social justice. Cyprus remains fully committed to fighting any kind of gender discrimination by pursuing policies that are designed to lead to a gender-sensitive and educated society — a society, which will secure dignity and respect for all its members in compliance with the principles of equality and justice.

Cyprus, since the ratification of the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 1985, launched a promising and dynamic national programme of action aiming at the pursuit of gender equality and equal participation of women in all walks of life. The programme consists of the formulation of a gender-comprehensive legal framework based both on international legal instruments and on gender-supportive domestic legislation, as well as of the adoption of consolidating mechanisms for the implementation of all commitments emanating from this legal framework.

The National Machinery plays a key role in all attempts to integrate gender perspective into all aspects of social and political life.

At the international level Cyprus in 2002:

1. Ratified the Optional Protocol to the CEDAW.
2. Accepted the amendment of article 20, paragraph 1 of the Convention.
3. Acceded to the convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages.

At the national level, domestic Law reform has been carried out especially in the field of Family and Labour legislation. In the field of Family Law a series of amendment Laws have been enacted, improving the legal framework concerning Property Rights among Spouses, Parents and Children Relations, Family Courts etc. In the field of Labour Law a series of legal measures, aiming at the improvement and expansion of the legal rights and protection of women at work, were adopted this year covering the areas of Maternity Protection, Social Pension, Social Security and Part-time work. Furthermore, within the framework of the process of harmonization with the *acquis communautaire* of the European Union in the social sector, the preparation of other important equality Laws has begun, including the drafting of the Law on Equal Opportunities and Treatment in Employment.

In terms of implementation of its objectives towards gender equality, Cyprus proceeded this year to an innovative Scheme for strengthening women's entrepreneurial activities. For the implementation of this scheme the Government has approved this year approximately one million dollars for funding women's activities in the fields of manufacture, trade and tourism. In addition, the recently established Women's Cooperative Bank Initiative also seeks to tackle, precisely, the problem of access to financial resources. Three hundred and fifty women with the vision to improve women's living standard founded the Women's Cooperative Bank, which started functioning in 2001 under the auspices of the Ministry of Commerce.

The Republic of Cyprus acknowledges that an important component of the new strategy of Gender Mainstreaming is putting in place such mechanisms as will allow gender issues to be integrated into key sectors of government, as well as of the private sector and civil society. To this purpose, close collaboration has been developed between government departments and the National machinery for Women's Rights on the one hand and with NGO's, academic institutions and other agencies on the other.

Within this framework of cooperation, it is worth noting that an International Conference on "Violence in the Family: a plan of action for the 21st century has been jointly and successfully organized by NGO's and the government of Cyprus in Nov. 2000 with the participation of civil society. The bureau of the secretariat of the conference will be hosted in Nicosia Cyprus till 2004.

ACTIVITIES ON GENDER ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Recently, particular emphasis was given on gender issues and the contribution of women in Agriculture. **The Agricultural Research Institute in co-operation with the EU** organized an International Conference on **"The New Challenge of Womens' Role in Rural Europe"**-October 2001. Seventy-five representatives from 26 countries participated in the Conference. The ARI participated at the Workshop on 'Gender and Water Resources Management in the Mediterranean' (Egypt - October 2002) and at the Workshop on 'Integration of Gender Dimension in Water Management in the Mediterranean Region (INGEDI), Bari- Italy, June 2004. Finally the ARI in cooperation with the EU organized the European Conference on **'Women and Sustainable Rural Development in Europe'**, June 2004. In that Conference, 25 representatives participated from 22 countries. The main topics discussed were:

Rural policies, Equal opportunities, Decision makings and Rural Women
Rural Women and Sustainable Development
Rural Women education, Skills, Employment and female entrepreneurship
Changes in Rural Society and Rural Women

Recommendations from the two Conferences:

It was suggested that either an EU-directive should be enforced or national lobbies should be activated in order to achieve a **Pan-European or National plan for rural women**. An organised lobby might also be built up upon village councils that are often mixed, but mostly do not network much outside the local borders.

Better access to adult education in rural areas, better conditions for distant learning, support the use of computers, support the development of tailor-made training and advice for rural women, train trainers and advisors on the specific needs and capacities of rural women.

Strengthening networks on rural women. Networks at different levels are required that will enlighten and improve the understanding of the constrains and opportunities rural women are faced with. Among these networks, a network of researchers, rural development practitioners and policy makers takes a priority.

European Union (Eurostat) should **process and publish statistical information on rural women workforce and employment characteristics**, based on common definition of rural areas.

Expertise development, exchange and other ways of capacity building.

Research findings should be written in a policy format with recommendations and be promoted through the popular media, i.e. radio, television, newspapers, and community and organization newsletters.

Successful examples of bottom-up or top-down approaches should be studied for enlightening main factors behind success, as it seems that in successful cases there is rather a synergy and complementarity of both approaches.

Further research

For relevant policies, institutions, national and local labour markets and culture, to understand processes of change in rural areas.

In to the economic viability of the farm-based activities or small rural businesses that women are involved.

On the changing gender roles of men in rural areas, in understanding appropriate approaches, in promoting opportunities for women, and mainly on effective mechanisms of support (entrepreneurship centres, training, education etc.)

In order to support women and to improve the employment and living conditions in rural areas in general:

- provisions like public transport and child care institutions should not only be improved and available but also affordable,

- women should be involved in rural development policies.
- rural women willingness to invest in the improvement of rural living conditions should be properly used,
- governments should prove their serious intentions to realise gender equality in all its consequences and the respect for and belief in womens´ initiatives and participation in the change process.

CONCLUDING REMARKS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

Although constitute 15% of the economically active population and about half of them are employed in the rural economy, “farming is still regarded as a man’s world”. Men remain the chief beneficiaries of productions aid from structural funds. This clearly demonstrates **a need to support and raise women’s profile in the decision-making process.**

“**Gender equality must be put at the center of rural development policy worldwide**”. This means supporting policies that promote the role of women in the economy, and reducing the level of female unemployment in rural areas. Despite many measures already being put in place to create additional work in rural tourism, processing and marketing of rural products, and in connection with the introduction of rural technologies, this remains a significant problem. Further efforts are also needed to provide the necessary training in these skills (Fischler F., 2002).

There is much that remains to be done to promote equal opportunities in agriculture and rural life. Closer attention needs to be focused on certain areas. For example, the **level of training** of women working on farms is low. Unless improvements are made rapidly, agriculture runs the risk of an uncertain future just at a time when responsible and skilled farm managers are needed. Conditions need to be created or maintained that encourage women to remain in this sector of the economy or at least to continue living on farms.

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