

CONFERENCE PAPER**THE MODERN FARMER'S DAUGHTER: IS FARMING AN OPTION?***Louise C Elliott*

This paper compares and contrasts the traditional role of the farmer's wife with her modern role, and then goes on to explore the aspirations and likely destination of the modern farmer's daughter. An online survey was completed by 447 female respondents from farming backgrounds in the UK. Although there were a number of options open to farmers' daughters including higher education, full time employment and inheritance of the family farm, they tended to aspire to be farmers' wives, not farming in their own right but marrying a farmer or farmers' son.

Key words

Women, daughter, wives, farming, aspirations, career.

Introduction

Farming is a lifestyle involving hard work and long hours (Policy Studies Institute, 2005). It is a traditional industry and the way of life is very much family orientated (Gasson and Winter, 1992). Family farms are passed down through generations (Gasson and Winter, 1993), and the business is expected to support and employ a number of family members, with outside help used in the absence of family labour (Whatmore, 1999).

A number of studies during the last century, discussed by Gasson and Winter (1993) found that farmers are likely to be farmers' sons, and similarly are likely to marry farmers' daughters. Succession and retirement planning are key to sustaining family farms (Davenport, 2007). From 1999 to 2004, the entry rate into agriculture was 2% of the farming population and the exit rate was 18% (DEFRA, 2007). Although no firm barriers to entry were identified by DEFRA (ADAS Consulting Ltd, 2004), their 2004 study did not consider gender when collating responses.

Research and experience suggests that in most farming households, the married couple, jointly running a family farm, rarely share equal power (Shortall, 1999). The male figure is responsible for making decisions and running the business, often entailing manual labour (Blanc and MacKinnon, 1990; Gasson and Winter, 1992; Goodall, 2008) whereas the woman or wife is traditionally responsible for domestic work and raising the children (Verdon, 2003; Gasson, 1980a, 1980b; Little, 1987; Gasson *et al* 1988).

This paper looks at the traditional and modern role of the farmers' wife and identifies changes. Further to this, primary research is undertaken to establish what the aspirations of farmers' daughters are, the findings will be used to determine whether the role of the farmer's wife is a role that farmers' daughters wish to fulfil.

This paper was originally presented at the ROOTS Conference 2010 – The Annual RICS Rural Research Conference – 13-14th April 2010, at Plumpton College, Sussex. It is reprinted by kind permission of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and the author.

Historical Context

The agricultural industry has seen substantial changes over the past 50 years (Grigg, 1989). Martin (2000) believes these changes have been strongly influenced by government intervention and trading patterns; however there have also been drastic changes due to disease outbreaks and market conditions (NFU, 2007). One notable change is the move from the productivist phase which was encouraged by the government following the food shortage and rationing during the Second World War (WW2), to a more conservationist and incentive-led approach following the CAP reform (DEFRA, 2006).

An increasing population over the past 2000 years has led to the majority of the UK population being estranged to agricultural practices (Ilbery and Watts, 2004). Short *et al* (2008) supported the theory that the urban-rural divide is increasing. However, DEFRA (2004) confirm that country living is becoming increasingly desirable and as a result there has been net migration from urban to rural areas since the seventies.

Agriculture, as an industry, has been struggling with low prices and increased competition from the world market worsened by heightening production costs. Diseases, including Foot and Mouth, BSE, Blue Tongue and Bird Flu have not helped the sector (NFU, 2007). Research shows a decline in large and medium sized holdings since 1950, mainly those in the labour intensive dairy and livestock sectors thus having the most significant impact on employment. There is also evidence of an increasing number of small holdings since 1990, found to be lifestyle and hobby farm sector (ADAS Consulting Ltd, 2004; Spedding, 2008).

Since the end of WW2, there has been stable growth of 20 million in the UK population (Jefferies, 2005). Three identifiable variations are; fewer births occurred during the first half of WW2, the post war baby boom in the late forties and early fifties, and the next generation of these baby boomers (ONS, 2008a; Jefferies, 2005).

As a developed country the UK strives for employment equality. With a “fairly equal” gender ratio for those of working age (ONS, 2008a), it is unclear why between 1998-2008 there were nearly 10% more men in work than women (ONS 2008c). The Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2007 Gender Pay Gap report shows an 11.5% difference in earnings between male and female workers (in favour of males). This increased when respondents were married or cohabiting; women with children were on lower pay than those without, and the pay gap increased with the number of children (Leaker, 2008).

Although the marriage rate is declining, it is important to note that it is still the most common form of partnership (ONS, 2008b). The 2001 Census shows that of those aged 30-74 years, approximately 64.7% were married compared with the 1951 Census where 77% were married. In 2001, 11% of that age group were divorced compared to 1951, where only 7% were (figures adapted from ONS, 2003; HMSO, 1956).

The Women in Employment Survey (WES) (1980) found that 46% of women agreed that it was the husband’s responsibility to get an income, and the wife’s responsibility to look after the home and family. While in 2002 this figure had reduced to 15%, 46% of married women with children under school

age still felt they ought to stay at home (Martin, 2005). Although women tend to marry at a younger age than men, the overall age of marriage is increasing. It seems there is a direct correlation between the age of marriage and the average age of a married female at the birth of her first child; they are both increasing, suggesting a standardised period between marriage and children (ONS, not dated a; not dated b).

Research suggests that women tend to return to part time work after having children or choose not to work (Roberts, 2005). As a result, unmarried women earn more than married women (Leaker, 2008). The trend identified above, stating that women marry at a later age should improve their earning capacity, yet the choice to have children earlier in the marriage may have a detrimental affect on this.

The total number of workers employed in the agricultural, fishing and forestry sectors has been declining over the past thirty years. This could be due to a number of factors, Gasson *et al* (1988) suggest the increased cost of labour relative to other costs; moreover the manual nature of male agricultural labour suggests it is most likely due to increased mechanisation (DEFRA, 2008b). The decline of female workers appears to be less than male workers; however there is still a net loss of 28.3%. Female roles as farm administrators, secretaries and other similar roles are not likely to have been replaced by mechanisation despite technological improvements. Short *et al* (2008) argue that the decline of jobs in the agricultural sector is to some extent counteracted by an increase in jobs in other areas of agriculture, including the service sector such as conservation, tourism and recreation.

Women and employment

Historically, the work of the farmer's wife has not been recorded due to a lack of records such as employment contracts or wages (Verdon, 2003, Gasson, 1980b); however it is widely considered that the farmers' wife's contribution to the family business is economically significant (Gasson, 1992). Warren-Smith and Monk (2000) identify that the farmers' wife adds value when it is needed and is adaptable to changing economic conditions.

"A man without a wife has no business with a dairy"
(Verdon, 2003 cites BPP, 1867-8)

Verdon (2003) recognised that during the eighteenth century the domestic role of women necessitated the need for self sufficiency in providing for the family, this role extended to managing and working in the dairy (Verdon, 2003 cites Henry, not dated). As farm sizes increased and shifted towards larger scale production the "farmers' wife lost her productive function" (p.24, Verdon, 2003). It is unclear as to whether the farmer's wife chose to leave her traditional role (Pinchbeck, 1930; 1981) or was forced out as a result of mechanisation and commercialisation of the dairy sector (Valenze, 1991 in Verdon, 2003).

Shortall (1999) identified a divide in feelings as to whether men should have taken away the dairy enterprise and with it, the women's role and economic contribution to farm income. Pinchbeck (1981) (in Shortall, 1999) believed that the shift in the industry was "wholly favourable to the farm

wife” (p.75) and meant that farm women had an elevated status which, allowed them to become educated, partake in social activities and leave their manual hardship and isolations behind, Verdon (2003) agreed that farm women achieved an elevated status.

Traditionally, the woman’s place has been in the home with the primary role as housewife-mother (Haralambos *et al*, 2000). In urban areas an egalitarian society is developing where men and women have more equal roles, particularly in the work place; however there is little evidence to suggest that the traditional role of women has changed in the primary sector (Haralambos *et al*, 2000). Farm women have habitually been in charge of household duties, and any involvement in other agricultural activities is merely a part of their domestic role, including the raising of offspring (Whatmore, 1999; Haralambos *et al*, 2000; Gasson, 1990; Gasson *et al*, 1988). Whatmore’s (1999) research established that all women surveyed carried out the majority of domestic work, including childcare. Goodall (2008) supported that women were more responsible for undertaking domestic duties.

Women in agriculture, evidently have a far more diverse role than mere household duties (Verdon, 2003; Gasson, 1992; 1980a). Goodall (2008) shows the diverse range of on-farm work that women carry out including milking, tractor driving, running errands, feeding livestock, dealing with visitors and answering business calls. Gasson and Winter (1992) suggest that the woman’s role on the farm, has historically, been in the farm office and caring for livestock. In Whatmore’s (1999) own research, she disagreed with Gasson (1981) finding that women were merely the ‘dogsbody’, running errands and answering the phone.

Whatmore (1999) states that the treatment of family labour and the division of roles stems from a Marxist approach. She takes a feminist view of relations arguing that the so-called ‘natural divide’ of family labour is not natural and extremely sexist. The balance of power is a topic that has been studied in some depth by a number of sociologists (Shortall, 1999; Little, 1987; Alston, 2000), and although it is an area that deserves considerable coverage, for the purpose of this study it is only to be covered by the extent to which it forms part of, and has changed the woman’s role.

Former studies show the male figure is largely responsible for making decisions relevant to the farm business (Blanc and MacKinnon, 1990; Gasson and Winter, 1992). Goodall (2008) found that 96% of men were responsible for making large decisions for the farm business, and that over 80% of women were responsible for household decisions. This supports evidence that the women’s role has a domestic focus and that the male role is more associated with the farm business. Alston (2000) finds that power in the agricultural sector is linked to land ownership and is passed through inheritance and marriage to, most likely, a male.

Planning

This area is one that has been of great interest to a number of researchers and the focus of many studies globally. It is a vast topic, and although it is recognised by the researcher as significantly influential on the aspirations of

farmers' daughters and arguably affects the role women adopt and accept within the rural community, it is one that is only touched on here.

"Social norms dictate that the heir is male" (Shortall, 1999, p.32)

Research suggests that the barriers and discrimination faced by women are historical. Patrilineal inheritance, whereby property and titles are passed down through male lines seems ever strong in UK agriculture (Shortall, 1999). This is, immediately a barrier for farmers' daughters as farm ownership often bypasses them in favour of a male. Shortall (1999) cites Hedley (1982) calling the term family farm a misnomer, in that the ownership is most usually found in the name of the most senior male. Inheritance and the destination of farmers' daughters has been an issue and part of government policy in Western and Central Europe (Shortall, 2006). Gasson and Winter (1993) state that in the 1940's, 80% of farmers in England and Wales, were farmers' sons; in the late sixties this had increased to 83%; and in their own research they found the figure to be nearer 75% but that over half of farmers' sons had married farmers' daughters.

MAFF (1981) state that the solution to succession is to know the aspirations of those likely to succeed. In agriculture, the preservation of the farm is often a priority; however Saffery Champness (2005) found that there is increasing pressure for an estate to be shared equally amongst children. Unlike other European countries and Scotland; England and Wales do not have a 'forced heirship' policy (Scandia, 2008). MAFF (1981) observes that division of a family farm is often unfeasible and thus offspring may be forced to find employment elsewhere. Social norms, discussed above dictate that the farmer's heir is most likely to be male, implying that any female dependants will be forced to seek employment elsewhere.

Chevalier (2001) found that male graduates of agricultural studies were highly likely to follow the occupation of their father. Laband and Lentz (1983) work supported this, finding there was a strong tendency for farmers' sons to become farmers, Gasson and Winter (1993) found this tendency was heightened as the size of the farm increased. Neither research discusses the destination of farmers' daughters. Laband and Lentz (1983) identify two issues with agriculture being an inherited occupation; one associated with the transfer of capital assets, and the second with the son's decision to farm the land. The researchers also comment that farming is the strongest example of intergenerational transfer of knowledge between father and son.

Education

"There is no tool for development more effective than the education of girls" (International Plan, 2008).

Girls are achieving higher grades than boys (ONS, 2007a), and a higher percentage of girls are studying and obtaining degrees at university (International Plan, 2008; Munn, 2006), yet fewer women are in full time

employment or getting the highest paid jobs compared with men (ONS, 2008c). The number of students attaining HE qualifications is increasing; with a higher proportion of female students attaining HE qualifications than males.

“That part of a holding of a farmer or landowner that pays best for cultivation is the small estate within the ring fence of his skull” (Charles Dickens (1868) in Norman, 1998)

Education in agriculture is delivered at different levels and institutions. There have been several changes in the method of delivery by agricultural institutions; including an increase in the diversity of courses offered, paired with an increase in degree level courses.

Historically agricultural colleges have seen a larger proportion of males to females, however since the mid nineties it appears the gender divide has been narrowing with little difference in post 2000 intakes.

Entry Barriers and Opportunities

This paper touches on the barriers to and opportunities for female entrants, predominantly focussing on those already involved in the industry [i.e. farmers’ daughters]. The key barriers and opportunities include inheritance, marriage, and family commitments.

The CAP Health Check urged new entrants to be encouraged into agriculture. As a result DEFRA commissioned the ‘Entry to and Exit from Farming’ report (ADAS Consulting Ltd, 2004). Its findings are commendable, however it can be criticised in that it did not differentiate between genders. The report focused on the futures of agricultural students. Students were asked to give reasons for their choice of career, identifying any barriers they faced. Substantial evidence referred to throughout this paper shows that there is a variation in the treatment of males and females in agriculture and this discrimination appears ever strong when looking at the barriers to female entrants. Britton’s (1990) research found there was little information available identifying the factors affecting women’s entry into agriculture.

The report identified factors preventing entry to the industry as; increasing farm size, shortage of farms to rent, high costs of setting up a farming enterprise and the reluctance of older farmers to retire (ADAS Consulting Ltd, 2004). Emphasis in DEFRA’s research is placed on the barriers to ‘*new entrants*’, yet there is widespread evidence suggesting that barriers are also faced by current industry members, specifically women.

Paine conducted a survey of Young Farmers Club (YFC) members in the South East of England that looked at their commitments to YFC as well as their background. Analysis of his raw data found that considerably more males than females had considered a career in agriculture; with only 15% of females considering it, even though 45% of females were from a farming background. Of those that said yes, only 33% were from farming backgrounds, suggesting that the remaining 67% of farmers’ daughters were looking to move away from agriculture.

Paine (2008) finds that the majority (36%) of respondents had ‘just never

thought about a career in agriculture'. Excluding this, the main deterrent was *Bad Pay*. The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings showed that those employed in the agriculture, hunting and forestry sector were the second lowest paid (Anon, 2008). Given the gender pay gap discussed above, it is conceivable that this barrier would be greater to female entrants than males, however there is no research to support this. Further deterrents, were a lack of prospects (8%), few jobs (12%), or impossible to get started.

The rise in students studying HE, and more specifically the increase in female students studying at agricultural institutions suggests the opportunities to females are widening. Britton (1990) supports this in her research, stating that females now have a wide range of courses and careers open to them. Despite these broadening opportunities, Alston (2000) states that women's main method of entry to farming is that of marriage, Gasson and Winter (1993) also found that half of male farmers in their research were married to farmers' daughters.

Survey of farmers daughters

To explore these issues further an online survey was designed and made available for 21 days targeting farmers' daughters and advertised through agricultural colleges, universities, clubs and online media. 447 people completed all the questions. Respondents from a purely 'working farm' background and aged 16-35 were selected generating 372 valid responses. This selection excluded those from hobby farms and mere houses with land to ensure the usable sample included only bona-fide farmers' daughters (Gasson and Winter, 1993).

What is the traditional role of women in UK agriculture?

In order to assess the modern role and changing role, it is first important to establish the traditional role. This has largely been done through the review of literature. A deductive approach was then used to test the theories found.

- 93% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed that agriculture is a traditional industry.
- 88% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed that agriculture is a male dominated industry.
- 85% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed that women carry out the majority of domestic work.
- 79% of respondents disagreed/strongly disagreed that manual work on the farm was not a job for a woman.
- 82% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed that the traditional role of the farmer's wife is changing.

These results closely relate to the trends found in published literature showing that the industry is traditional and male dominated. Respondents also agreed that women carried out the majority of domestic work, however they largely disagreed that women could not help with manual work which conflicts with a number of mainstream studies including Gasson (1980a; 1980b) that found women were largely uninvolved in manual work except at

peak times or if unmarried and farming in their own right.

The feminist view taken by some researchers (Whatmore, 1999) described the role of farmers' wife, as one that ties the woman to the farm, takes away her independence, gives all power to the male, and leaves her to undertake domestic duties, raise the children, etc – all of which is said to be unrecognised. Stress, isolation, loneliness and social exclusion have been identified as negative factors in research. Other researchers including Little and Austin (1996) held a positive view of country living, and identified the attraction of the rural idyll.

Respondents recognised the advantages and disadvantages associated with being a woman in agriculture, yet did not appear to hold a negative view of this traditional role, and as a result were unlikely to be put off by the negativities so regularly documented in research.

What is the modern role of women in UK agriculture?

Having found that respondents largely supported researchers' views of the traditional role of women; it is interesting to find that 81% agreed their parents took traditional roles. Given the age group of respondents, and their parents; the traditional role of women is also likely to be the modern role.

Social and demographic profile

Eighty-seven percent of respondents' parents were married; this was found to be considerably higher than the 2001 national average (64.7%) for those aged 30-74 years. The proportion of divorced couples was found to be 7%; this is lower than the national average (11%). The most likely age category for marriage was 22-24 years, with 90% of respondents' mothers aged between 16-27 when married; this was similar to the national average up to 1971.

It could be assumed that national trends found in the literature review, showing women marrying at a later age and the narrowing gap between age of marriage and time of first child are likely to be true for farm women. However, a higher than average proportion are likely to be married and are less likely to get divorced.

Background

Results showed that 63% of respondents' parents were both from farming backgrounds (see Figure 1), which, in the case of males, supported the findings of Gasson and Winter (1993). However, this figure showed that, in over half of all cases, farmers' sons had married farmers' daughters, which was considerably higher than that found by Gasson and Winter (1993).

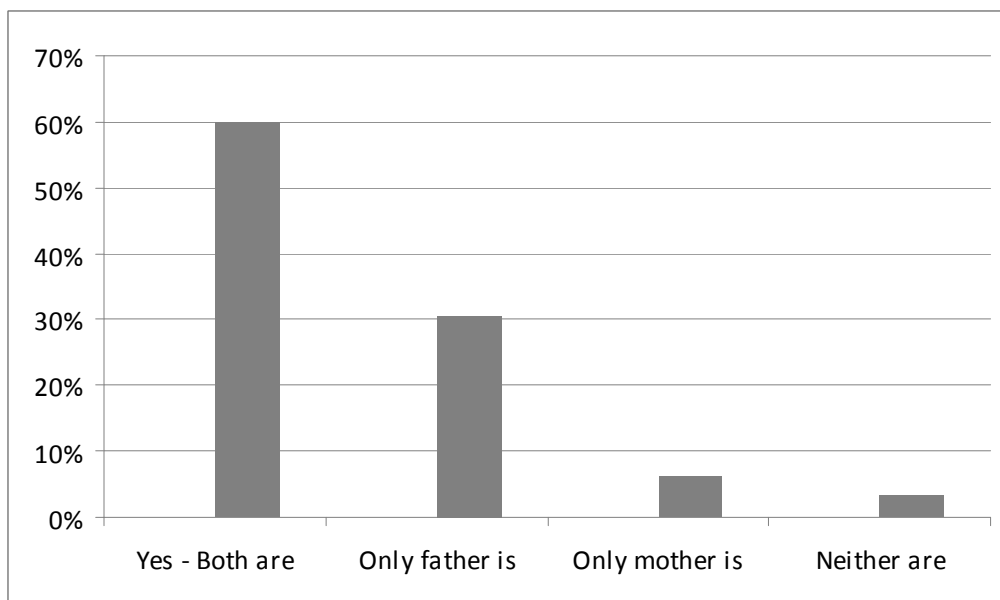
Thirty-one per cent of male farmers married females from non farming backgrounds, and in only 5% of marriages was it evident that only the female was from a farming background. This suggests that either women from farming backgrounds marry men from farming backgrounds and are thus featured in the 'Yes-both are' result, or that they are not staying in the industry and do not feature in the results. Given the large proportion of parents in 'both having a farming background', it suggests farmers' daughters do tend to marry farmers' sons. It was also found that 1% had no farming background at all,

supporting evidence that those entering the industry required a farming upbringing (Gasson and Winter, 1993; ADAS Consulting Ltd, 2004).

Finding a spouse

Respondents were asked to specify where their parents met (see Figure 2), finding that over half met through the National Federation of Young Farmers Clubs (YFC) and a quarter met through a farming friend or community. This shows that either farmers' daughters and farmers' sons are very suited, or that farming offspring only associate with members of the farming community. Cross tabulation was used along with Chi-square analysis to test this relationship. It was found that there was a significant relationship between the background of respondents' parents and how they met at a 1% level of significance. It found that where both parents were from a farming background, more than expected met through YFC. Where neither or only one parent was from a farming background, less than expected met at YFC. Where only the mother, or neither parent was from a farming background, it was higher than expected that they met their partner through university or school. There are now a number of new and established rural social networking channels, stating that people from rural backgrounds struggle to find partners; given the higher than average marriage rate, and the high likelihood of meeting someone through YFC, it is questionable as to why these businesses are setting up.

Figure 1: Farming backgrounds of respondents' parents

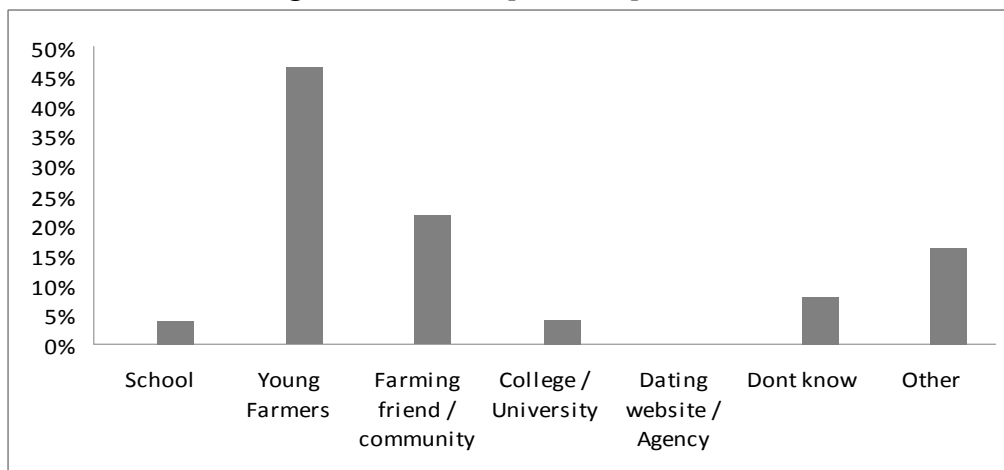


Advantages and disadvantages of a farmers' wife's role

Respondents were asked to state the advantages and disadvantages of being a farmer's wife. These were open questions and generated a number of similar responses which were grouped. Foreseen advantages included the rural idyll, bringing up children in the countryside, keeping animals including horses and a good social life. Drawbacks mentioned included stress, loneliness, having to undertake all domestic chores and raise a family, lack of holidays and long hours.

A number of advantages stated by some, were seen as disadvantages by others, for example some identified the benefit of having "*freedom from the 9-5 lifestyle*", whereas others complained that you were tied to the farm, had little independence and no holidays. Some boasted about the "*security of income*", contradicted by a number of respondents who identified poor pay, falling farming incomes and as a result, an insecure industry as a disadvantage. Some respondents felt that they would get to spend time with their husband, seeing him whenever they wanted, yet others complained they would "*never see or spend quality time with husband*".

Figure 2: Where respondents' parents met



The fact that there were similar responses suggests that there is a definite role or image of farmers' wives which is witnessed and understood by farmers' daughters. A number of factors appeared as both advantages and disadvantages, which questions the clarity of this perceived role, and suggests that it varies from farm to farm, or that respondents do not fully understand this role or have misconceptions. Although a number of these factors have been addressed in previous research (Monk, Little, Austin, Whatmore, Shortall, Gasson) few strategies or policies have been implemented in the UK to attract women specifically to rural areas, or to lessen the negativities for future generations.

What are the aspirations of farmers' daughters in the UK?

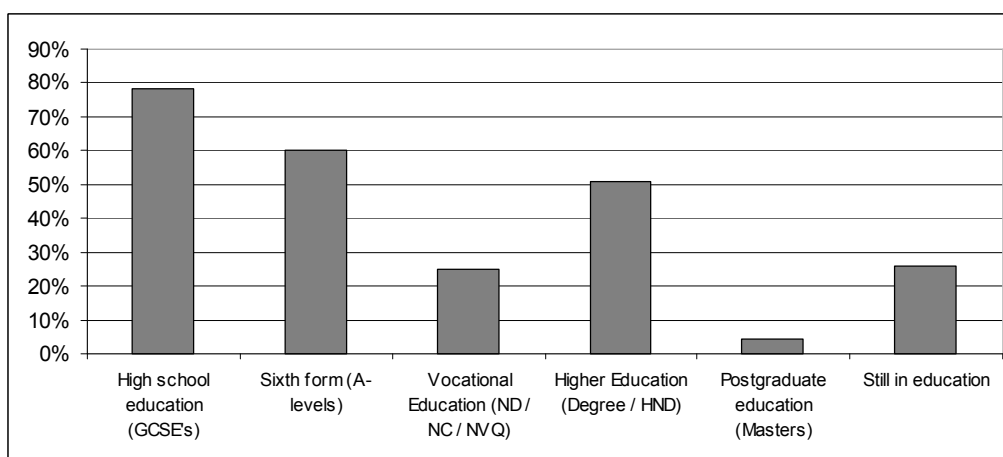
Although the traditional role of women in farming has been established it is still unclear as to whether young females are being drawn into the industry or deserting it. This section will compare and contrast the aspirations of modern day farmers' daughters in order to ascertain the extent to which they will be able to, or wish to, fulfil this traditional role.

Profile of respondents

A high proportion of respondents were still in education with a large percentage studying at agricultural institutions, this is likely to be skewed and could be unrepresentative of the population due to the sample frame.

The results (shown in Figure 3) found that 53% of respondents had studied or were studying at HE level, this is higher than the national figure which showed that 49% of females (aged 17-30) participated in education of this level. The majority of respondents specified that they left education as they had achieved all they wanted or needed, or to take up employment and earn a living.

Figure 3: Level of education attained by respondents

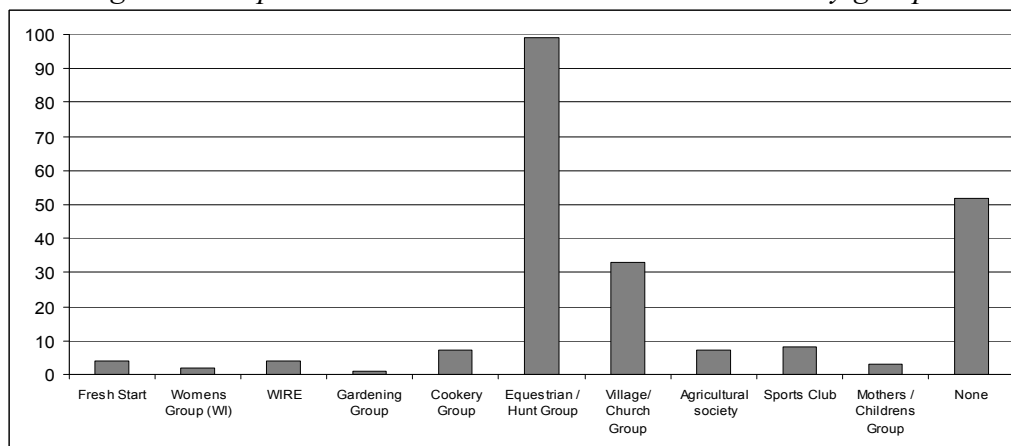


A number of those in education reported helping on the farm and a later question probed whether this was out of choice or necessity. It found that nearly half were involved in the business as much as they would like to be, and very few were involved more than they would like, suggesting that they were happy combining studying with helping on the farm. The literature review found that women were not involved in decision making or running the farm, however these results show that women are happy with the level of involvement they have. Gasson (1992) found that the level of involvement on farm was linked to the size of the holding. However, when tested no relationship was found in the Chi-Squared test.

It was found that a large proportion of respondents were members of local societies, this supported Gasson (1980b) findings of traditional women. A break down of groups showed that mixed gender social groups were mostly

agricultural in their focus, 83% of respondents were members of YFC, with other popular clubs shown in Figure 4 as hunt or equestrian clubs, Fresh Start, sports clubs and agricultural societies, these groups had the largest proportion of members. More female focused groups included mother/children groups, cookery groups, gardening groups and women's groups. Members recognised the benefits their contribution to these groups had, showing that farmers' daughters have an important role in the local rural community.

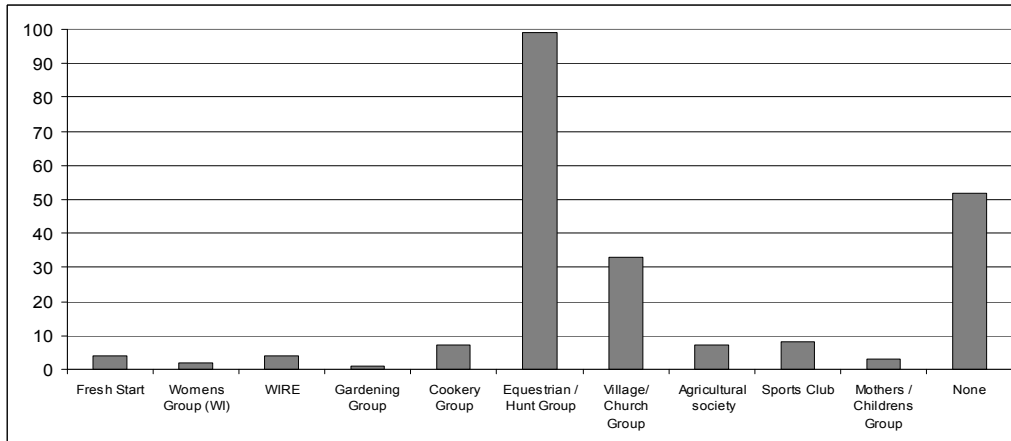
Figure 4: Respondents involvement in local and community groups.



Marriage and employment

When asked their aspirations with regards to being involved in farming or not, married or working; nearly 50% of respondents specified that they aspired to be a housewife (*farmer's*) and working compared to less than 5% that would like to be housewife (*non farmer's*) and working. This was surprising given the somewhat negative and disdainful role that the literature review found of farmers' wives and suggests that there must be greater advantages than previously found or another reason.

Figure 5 shows that nearly 40% of respondents specified they would like to be employed/working with no comment on their marital status, yet when asked directly, a cross tabulation showed that 51% of these also hoped to marry a farmer. Of this group, it is suggested that their priority is to find employment, but that subsequently they wish to marry a farmer. The literature review has demonstrated that the role of farmers' wives is highly demanding and requires the woman to always be on call to support the farmer, and thus these women will, upon marrying a farmer surely be forced to commit to the farm, as a result their employment may suffer or be brought to an end. Giving another reason as to why women are not finding the highest paid jobs (ONS, 2008c).

Figure 5: Respondents' aspirations with respect to farming

Are farmers' daughters' aspirations realistic and achievable?

Marriage

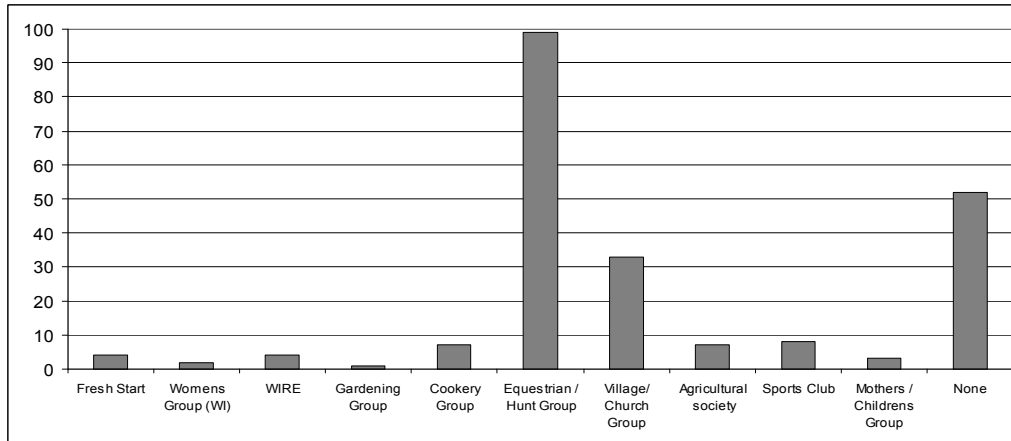
This study has found that women from a farming background have in the past tended to marry males in the same situation. However, it has been found that females do not wish to become a farmer in their own right even when given the opportunity, but wished to work themselves and take on the supportive role of the farmers' wife. This is to an extent occupational inheritance even though it could be argued that the role of farmer's wife appears to be more of a lifestyle choice than an occupation. There are a number of networking groups and dating agencies that state farmers are struggling to find wives due to the ties of their occupation, in light of this, the aspiration of farmers' daughters to marry a farmer seems realistic and achievable.

Inheritance

Patrilineal inheritance, the traditional means of inheritance in the UK, seems to be a barrier to farmers' daughters. Figure 6 shows 70% of respondents said that their brother (older or younger) was likely to take on the family farm; this supports Shortall (1999) who considered that this form of inheritance was prevalent in UK agriculture. However, when asked 50% of respondents felt that they could take on the family farm if they wished, suggesting that they did not want to.

The literature review found that occupational inheritance was especially strong in males (Chevalier, 2001 Laband and Lentz, 1983), which strengthened as the size of their farm increased (Gasson and Winter, 1993). The size of holding and background of respondents' parents showed a statistically significant relationship (chi-squared, $p > 0.01$) It was found that where the holding was less than 50 acres, it was more likely that neither parent had a farming background or that only the mother had a farming background. This supports evidence that those couples without a farming background are

Figure 6: Likelihood of other family members inheriting the farm



more likely to occupy smaller holdings.

Barriers

The main issues identified were financial. Specifically, there was poor profitability in farming, the family farm was unable to support another family member, and there were no funds to purchase a farm. Similar barriers were identified by Paine (2008) and ADAS Consulting Ltd (2004). Of those that specified 'other', eight felt that nothing would prevent them, 20 said they were not interested in staying in agriculture, and 11 said not marrying a farmer would prevent them.

The modern farmer's daughter: is farming an option

The traditional role of the farmer's wife is a supportive role. She undertakes errands necessary to help the day to day running of the farm and household, as well as carrying out domestic duties and raising the children. She is unlikely to be involved in manual labour except at peak times including lambing and in the absence of employed help. She rarely has a say in decision making. Her work is unrecorded and requires no qualifications. She is often isolated from her husband and friends, finding that her efforts are largely unrecognised.

The modern farmer's wife will have married later than her traditional counterpart, but at a similar age to that of the national average. She is likely to be from a farming background and to have married a farmer, they are most likely to have met through YFC. She again, will undertake all the domestic duties and will help on the farm during peak times. In times of hardship, she is likely to take off farm employment or diversify part of the business. Should both husband and wife be contributing economically, then it is more likely they will share equal roles and divide the childcare duties, however the wife will still be expected to undertake the domestic duties. She will enjoy the rural idyll, living in the countryside and keeping animals, as well as appreciating the

suitability of the location for raising her family and getting to spend time with her husband. She finds it difficult being tied to the farm and constantly being on call, but she enjoys the variety that the role entails. She finds the stress and isolation of rural life difficult especially during peak times when she is unlikely to see her husband or take holidays.

A number of barriers were identified by farmers' daughters, however it was found that they were not interested in pursuing farming as a career or taking on the family farm within the capacity of a farmer. 68% stated that they could take on the family farm if they wanted; it was found males siblings were more likely to take on the family farm than female siblings.

The research concluded that female entry into farming is likely to be through marriage or inheritance, although respondents did not wholly agree with this statement when asked.

When asked directly seventy-six per cent of farmers' daughters hoped to become farmers' wives. In order to achieve this, respondents identified the need to marry a farmer's son. Eighty-five per cent were members of YFC, and it would be likely that they would meet a future partner here. Over half of farmers' daughters had studied HE level education. This education is likely to have been undertaken at an agricultural institution and the participant is likely to have achieved a professional qualification including accountancy or surveying. Upon qualification, they are likely to specialise in the rural sector. This shows that tomorrow's farmers' wives are likely to be educated above the average level, and have the ability to work off the farm and earn an income higher than that expected from farming.

The respondents to this study had experienced the reality of family farming first hand despite all the disadvantages associated with being a farmer's wife identified within this study and former research, it appears that farmers' daughters still aspire to be farmers' wives. Or, to express it another way, farming is an option but not one that farmers' daughters wish to pursue without a husband.

About the author

Louise Elliott (LElliott@savills.com) graduated from Harper Adams University College with an Honours degree in Rural Enterprise and Land Management. Having spent twelve months specialising in the disposal and acquisition of farms and estates in Oxfordshire, Louise is now part of the Savills Estate Management team advising a number of private and institutional landowners across the East Midlands. Louise is currently working towards her APC and CAAV qualifications; she sits on the Junior Council of her CAAV Local Association and is part of the Nottinghamshire Matrics Committee. Having been brought up on a dairy farm in South Warwickshire, Louise finds the future sustainability of rural communities and overall economy a dynamic and interesting topic; she has recently been elected onto the Tenancy Reform Industry Group as a representative for Young Farmers members across England and hopes to undertake more research on the importance of the family farm and women in agriculture in the future.

References

Adams. K. and Brace. I. 2006. *An Introduction to Market and Social Research: Planning and using research tools and techniques*. London: Kogan Page Limited.

Agricultural Development and Advisory Service Consulting Ltd. 2004. *Entry to and Exit from Farming in the United Kingdom (RMP 2037)* [On-line]. ADAS. Available from: <https://statistics.defra.gov.uk/esg/reports/entryexit/finalreport.pdf>. [Accessed 10 December 2008].

Alston, M. 2000. *Breaking through the grass ceiling – women, power and leadership in agricultural organisations*. Australia: Harwood Academic Publishers.

Anon. 2008. *Herefordshire Partnership QER - Released December 2008*:

ANNUAL SURVEY OF HOURS & EARNINGS (ASHE) 2008 [On-line]. Available from: http://www.herefordshirepartnership.com/documents/QER_Feb_09_Annual_Survey_of_Hours_and_Earnings_2008.pdf [Accessed 10 February 2009].

Blanc. M., and MacKinnon. N. 1990. Gender Relations and the Family Farm in Western Europe. *Journal of Rural Studies*. 6 (4), 401-405.

Blaxter, L., Hughes, C., and Tight, M. 2006. *How to research*. 3rd ed. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Britton, N.A. 1990. *An investigation into some of the factors affecting the entry of women into agriculture in the 1950s and 1960s and the present day; thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the BSc (Hons) degree in Agriculture* Newport: Harper-Adams University College.

Commission for Rural Communities. 2008. *State of the Countryside* [On-line]. Available from: <http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/files/5613%20CRC%20SOC%20Summary%20Report%20A5.pdf> [Accessed 15 April 2009]

Czaja. R, and Blair. J. 2005. *Designing Surveys: a guide to decisions and procedures*. 2nd ed. London: Sage Publications Ltd

Chevalier. A. 2001. *Just like Daddy: The Occupational Choice of UK Graduates* [On-line]. Available from: <http://repec.org/res2002/Chevalier.pdf>. [Accessed 22 April 2009]

Davenport. D. 2007. *Factors affecting family farms' succession and retirement plans within Warwickshire; thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the BSc (Hons) degree in Rural Enterprise and Land*

Management. Newport: Harper Adams University College

Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. 2004. *Annex B - Summary of Evidence Base* [On-line]. DEFRA. Available from: http://www.defra.gov.uk/rural/strategy/annex_b.htm. [Accessed 9 February 2009].

Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. 2006. *Food Security and the UK: An Evidence and Analysis Paper* [On-line]. DEFRA. Available from: <http://statistics.defra.gov.uk/esg/reports/foodsecurity/foodsecurity.doc>. [Accessed 12 February 2009].

Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. 2008a. *Working in farming - Women's Land Army* [On-line]. DEFRA. Available from: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/working/wla/> [Accessed 19 February 2009].

Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. 2008b. *Observatory monitoring framework – indicator data sheet* [On-line]. DEFRA. Available from: <https://statistics.defra.gov.uk/esg/ace/pdf/b9.pdf>. [Accessed 29 January 2009].

Department for Rural Environment and Affairs. Not dated. *The Rural Development Programme for England 2007-2013* [On-line]. DEFRA. Available from: www.defra.gov.uk/rural/rdpe/. [Accessed 29 March 2009].

Department for Innovation, Universities & Skills. 2009. Participation rates in Higher Education: Academic Years. [On-line]. DIUS. Available from: Error! Hyperlink reference not valid. [Accessed 29 March 2009].

Dobbs, C. 2007. Patterns of pay: results of the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 1997 to 2006. *Economic & Labour Market Review* [On-line]. 1 (2) Error! Hyperlink reference not valid. [Accessed 19 March 2009].

Dwyer, G. 2001. *Women; Access to Agriculture*. Uckfield: Nuffield Farming Scholarships Trust.

Gasson, R. 1980a. Roles of Farm Women in England. *Sociologica Ruralis*. 20 (3), 165-180.

Gasson, R. 1980b. *The Role of Women in British Agriculture*. Colchester: The Women's Farm and Garden Society.

Gasson, R. 1981. Roles of women on farms: A pilot study. *Journal of Agricultural Economics* 32 (1), 11-20.

Gasson, R. 1990. *The Hidden Workforce: A survey of the spouse's contribution to the family farm business*. Cirencester: The Women's Farm and Garden Association.

Gasson, R. 1992. Farmers' wives – their contribution to the farm business. *Journal of Agricultural Economics*. 43 (1), 74-87.

Gasson, R., Crow, G., Errington, A., Hutson, J., Marsden, T., and Winter, D. 1988. The farm as a family business: A review. *Journal of Agricultural Economics*. 39 (1988) 1-41.

Gasson, R. and Winter, M. 1992. Gender Relations and Farm Household Pluriactivity. *Journal of Rural Studies*. 8 (4), 387-397.

Gasson, R. and Winter, M. 1993. Entry to Farming. *Farm Management*. 8 (6), 253-262.

Goodall, J. M. 2008. *A Socio-Economic Analysis of Family Farm Labour: thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the BSc (Hons) degree in Rural Enterprise and Land Management*. Newport: Harper Adams University College.

Grigg, D. 1989. *English agriculture: a historical perspective*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Haralambos, M., Holborn, M., and Heald, R. 2000. *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives*. 5th ed. Hammersmith: HarperCollins.

Higher Education Statistics Agency. Not dated. *Students and Qualifiers Data Tables* [On-line]. HESA. Available from: http://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_datatables&Itemid=121&task=show_category&catdex=3 [Accessed 29 March 2009].

Ilbery, B., and Watts, D., 2004. Agricultural Restructuring in the West Midlands Region, 1950-2002. *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England* [On-line], 2004, 165. Available from http://www.rase.org.uk/activities/publications/RASE_journal/search.asp?ShowYear=2004 [Accessed 10 December 2008.]

International Plan Ltd, 2008. Paying the Price – The economic cost of failing to educate girls [On-line]. Available from: www.plan-international.org/pdfs/girls_education_economics.pdf [Accessed 9 December 2008].

Jefferies, J. 2005. *Focus on: People and Migration. The UK population: past, present and Future* [On-line]. Office for National Statistics. Available from: Error! Hyperlink reference not valid. [Accessed 18 January 2009]

Jones, E.W. 1998. Contemporary Issues Shaping the Future of English Higher Education in Agriculture. *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England*. 159, 167-183.

- Laband, D. and Lentz, B.F. 1983. Occupational inheritance in agriculture. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*. 65 311-314.
- Leaker, D. 2008. The Gender Pay Gap in the UK. *Economic and Labour Market Review* [On-line], 2 (4). Available from: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/elmr/04_08/downloads/elmr_apr08_leaker.pdf [Accessed 9 February 2009].
- Lewis, J. 1985. *Women and Society: Continuity and Change since 1870*. [On-line]. Available from: <http://www.ehs.org.uk/society/pdfs/Lewis%201b.pdf>. [Accessed 18 January 2009].
- Little, J. 1987. Gender Relations in Rural Areas: the Importance of Women's Domestic Role. *Journal of Rural Studies*. 3 (4), 335-342.
- Little, J. and Austin, P. 1996. Women and the Rural Idyll. *Journal of Rural Studies*. 12 (2), 101-111.
- MAFF. 1981. *Succession, Retirement and Inheritance – Socio Economic Papers* No10. Booklet 2010. London: Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food
- Martin, J. 2000. *The development of modern agriculture: British Farming since 1931*. Hampshire: Macmillan Press Ltd.
- Martin, J. 2005. Methodological Innovations & Key Findings. In: *Celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the Women and Employment Survey: Changes in Women's Employment 1980-2005* held at Department of Trade and Industry, London. 5 December 2005. [On-line] Available from <http://www.genet.ac.uk/Events/dticonf.htm>. [Accessed 10 December 2008.]
- Munn, M. 2006. *Through the Glass Ceiling: Equalities in the 21st Century* [On-line]. Available from: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/speeches/corporate/glass-ceiling>. [Accessed 9 December 2008]
- National Farmers Union. 2007. *Why Beef and Sheep Farming Matters*. Stoneleigh: NFU
- Norman, L. 1998. Whither Agricultural Education? *Journal of the RASE*. 159, 158-166
- Office for National Statistics. 2008a. *Population Estimates* [On-line]. ONS. Available from: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cc/nugget.asp?ID=6>. [Accessed 8 December 2008].
- Office for National Statistics. 2008b. *Living arrangements*. [On-line]. ONS. Available from: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/CCI/nugget.asp?ID=1652&Pos=2&ColRank=2&Rank=1000> [Accessed 8 December 2008].

Office for National Statistics. 2008c. *Working Lives* [On-line]. ONS. Available from: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/ci/nugget.asp?id=1654>. [Accessed 8 December 2008].

Office for National Statistics. 2008d *Labour Force Survey, Q2 2008. Work and Family* [On-line]. ONS. Available from: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/CCI/nugget.asp?ID=1655&Pos=4&ColRank=2&Rank=1000> [Accessed 8 December 2008].

Office for National Statistics. 2008e. *Employee jobs by industry* [On-line]. ONS. Available from: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/STATBASE/tsdataset.asp?vlnk=341&More=Y> [Accessed 8 December 2008].

Office for National Statistics. 2007a. *Education: Girls continue to outperform boys* [On-line]. ONS. Available from: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/ci/nugget.asp?id=1892> . [Accessed 8 January 2009].

Office for National Statistics. 2007b. *UK Standard Industrial Classification of Economic Activities 2007 (SIC 2007) Structure and explanatory notes* [On-line]. Available from: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/methods_quality/sic/downloads/SIC2007explanatorynotes.pdf [Accessed 19 January 2009].

Office for National Statistics. 2005. *Births & deaths: Later start and fewer children for families* [On-line]. Available from: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/CCI/nugget.asp?ID=1309> &Pos=&ColRank=2&Rank=224 [Accessed 22 February 2009].

Office for National Statistics. 2003. *All people Part 1: Census 2001, National Report for England and Wales - Part 2* [On-line]. ONS. Available from: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/ssdataset.asp?vlnk=7547&Pos=&ColRank=2&Rank=256> [Accessed 2 April 2009].

Office for National Statistics. Not dated a. *Average age at marriage and divorce: Social Trends* [On-line]. ONS. Available from: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/ssdataset.asp?vlnk=7264&Pos=&ColRank=1&Rank=272> [Accessed 22 February 2009].

Office for National Statistics. Not dated b. *Average age at childbirth: Social Trends* [On-line]. ONS. Available from: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/ssdataset.asp?vlnk=6372&Pos=1&ColRank=2&Rank=272> [Accessed 22 February 2009].

Open University. Not dated. *Women at war: The role of women at work during World War Two. The Women's Land Army* [On-line]. Available from: <http://caber.open.ac.uk/schools/stanway/landarmy.html> [Accessed 29 January 2009].

Pinchbeck, I. 1930 (1981). *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850*. London: George Routledge.

Policy Studies Institute. 2005. *Farmers, Farm Workers and Work-Related Stress - RESEARCH REPORT 362* [On-line]. Available from: Error! Hyperlink reference not valid. [Accessed 30 March 2009]

Riley. M., Wood. R. C., Clark. M. A., Wilkie. E and Szivas. E. 2000. *Researching and Writing Dissertations in Business and Management*. London: Thomson Learning 2000.

Roberts, C. 2005. Putting Women on the research agenda - Why we did the Women and Employment Survey. In: *Celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the Women and Employment Survey: Changes in Women's Employment 1980-2005* held at Department of Trade and Industry, London. 5 December 2005. [On-line] Available from: <http://www.genet.ac.uk/Events/dticonf.htm>. [Accessed 10 December 2008.]

Saffery Champness. 2005. *Market Research report: The Succession Project*. [On-line]. Available from: http://www.saffery.com/manager/pdf/other_title/saffery_other_title_research_and_reports_the_succession_report_36.pdf. Accessed 27 October 2008.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P., and Thornhill. A. 2007. *Research methods for business students*. 4th ed. London: Pitman

Scandia. 2008. *Forced heirship - questions and answers* [On-line] Available from <https://www.skandia-life.co.uk/beacon/documentlibrary/pdf08/SK1416.pdf> [Accessed 29 March 2009].

Short, C., Ilbery, B., Courtney, P., Kambites, C., Boase, R., 2008. Exploring the interactions between land-based industries and communities in rural England. *Journal of Farm Management*, 13 (5), 369-378.

Shortall, S. 1999. *Women and farming: property and power*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Shortall, S., and Bock, B. 2006. *Rural gender relations: issues and case studies*. Cambridge: CABI.

Spedding, A. 2008. *Briefing 623 - Land tenure changes* [On-line]. Available from: www.arthurrankcentre.org.uk/projects/rusource_briefings/rus08/623.pdf [Accessed 30 March 2009]

Verdon, N. 2003. '...subjects deserving of the highest praise': farmers' wives and the farm economy in England, c.1700-1850. *Agricultural History Review*, 51 (1). 23-39.

Warren-Smith, I., and Monk, A. 2000. *A case for the participation of women to sustain the future of the rural economic community: An ongoing perspective indicating future policy implications.* In: Rural Communities and Identities in the Global Millennium held at the Malaspina University College, Nanaimo, B.C. Canada. May 1-5, 2000.

Whatmore, S. 1999. Life Cycle or Patriarchy? Gender Divisions in Family Farming. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 7 (1/2), 71-76.

Women and Equality Unit. 2007. Women's Work and Pay [On-line] Available from: <http://www.equalities.gov.uk/pay/pay.htm>. [Accessed 9 December 2008]