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Women Agricultural Landowners—Past Time to Put Them “On the Radar”

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ABSTRACT

While women own 25% of the acres rented out for farming, little has been done in terms of federal policy that focuses on these women. In this policy analysis, we detail how (1) lack of data on these women landowners and (2) the invisibility of these women to federal natural resource and agricultural agency staff contribute to women nonoperating landowners (WNOLs) not being on the federal policy radar. We discuss how the persistence of these factors continues to marginalize WNOLs in federal agricultural policy, despite the mandate of U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) agencies to be serving underserved populations such as WNOLs. Our study findings clearly illustrate a critical point: federal agricultural/conservation agencies are not fulfilling their mandate to reach WNOLs. Using data from USDA Production Regions in the United States, we detail how WNOLs are marginalized and provide specific policy recommendations to allow for intentional inclusion of these women.

ARTICLE HISTORY

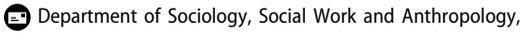
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Agricultural landowners; conservation; federal agricultural policy; gender; nonoperator landowners

Women play an increasingly important role in farmland ownership. They make up 37% of principal nonoperating landowners (NOLs), owning about 25% of the 354 million acres nationally rented out for farming in 2014 (United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Census of Agriculture 2014). Our specific interest in this policy analysis is on women nonoperator landowners (WNOLs)—women who own farmland by themselves or co-own it with a spouse, siblings, or other relatives. To date, little has been done in terms of policy that focuses on women who do not operate farms but instead own farmland that they lease out to others. As Wells and Eells (2011, p. 138A) note in a discussion on WNOLs; “*We know this: women have not been on the radar, received the services, or had messages crafted for them. They have been uninvited and excluded. It is in the best interest of the land to cater more to women farmland owners ... we need to step back and rethink programs from their standpoints ... Bringing disenfranchised women into the system will take institutional change, perhaps in the form of different (and perhaps smaller programs), revamped messages, or new support networks.*”

This powerful call for getting women landowners of agricultural land “on the radar” of U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) policymakers occurred 7 years ago. Ignoring the call made by Wells and Eells (2011) (and others, e.g., Bregendahl et al. 2007; Petrzelka and Marquart-Pyatt 2011; Carter 2016), to hear these women landowners’ voices has both social and environmental implications, including marginalization of the women and missed

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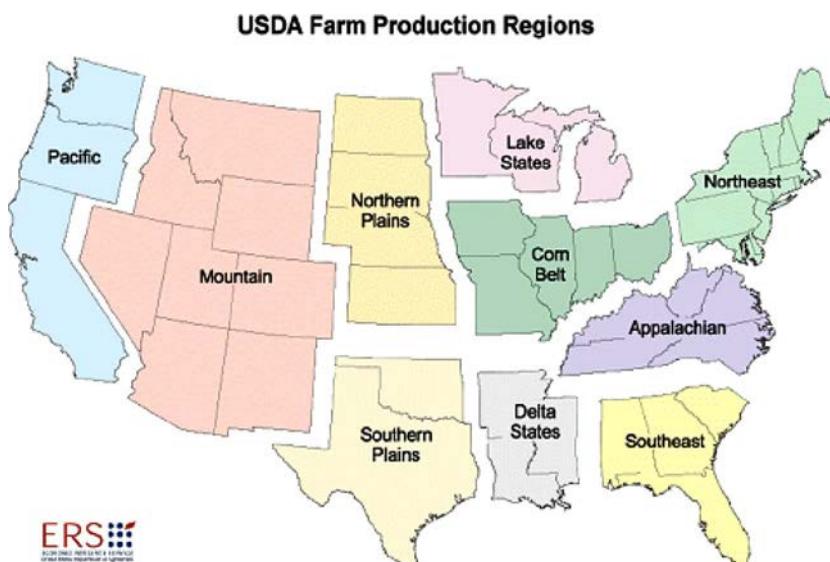


Figure 1. USDA production regions. *Note:* ERS, Economic Research Service; USDA, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

opportunities for conservation implementation on farmland. In this policy analysis, we detail two factors which contribute to WNOLs not being on the radar and discuss how the persistence of these factors continues to marginalize WNOLs in federal agricultural policy. We then turn to what we do know about women landowners and provide findings from focus group and survey data of 50 women landowners from around the United States that provide insights on how conservation outreach can be revamped from the women's standpoints, as called for by Wells and Eells (2011). We build upon Wells and Eells' (2011) work in two important ways. First, the data on WNOLs in their article is from one Iowa county. We expand the geographic coverage of WNOLs, by incorporating data from WNOLs located in seven of the 10 USDA Production Regions (Figure 1). Second, we provide specific federal policy recommendations we believe can shift the USDA's programs to invite in the women now marginalized and begin to put them on the radar.

Off the Radar

Lack of Data

The United States has traditionally done an extremely poor job of collecting data on agricultural landowners. The Census of Agriculture only reports information about owner-operators and data are not systematically collected from landowners who rent out their land to farmers. A source of national data on landowners in the United States is provided by the Agricultural Economic Land Ownership Survey (AELOS), which collects information from both landowners and their renters. AELOS surveys were conducted in 1988 and 1999 as follow-ups to the periodic census of agriculture (in 1987 and 1997, respectively). A national survey was again conducted in 2014, named the Tenure, Ownership, and Transfer of Agricultural Land (TOTAL) survey.

From the TOTAL survey, we learned that, in 2014, women principal landlords owned 87,269,480 acres, which represent nearly 10% of the 911 million acres used for agriculture in 2014, 25% of the 354 million acres rented out for farming, 31% of the 283 million acres rented out by nonoperator landlords and 46% of the 191 million acres rented out by nonoperator principal landlords (United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Census of Agriculture 2014).

While these figures on their own are substantial, we suspect that WNOLs are underrepresented in these above numbers based on anecdotal and localized evidence. First, 37% of the respondents to the TOTAL survey were women, yet we have evidence to suggest the percentage of women landowners is much larger. For example, the Iowa land ownership survey,¹ which has collected panel data from a representative statewide sample of land parcels and landowners in Iowa since 1949 (Duffy and Smith 2008) shows in 2012, 49% of Iowa's agricultural landowners were WNOLs (Duffy and Johanns 2012). They owned 47% of Iowa's farmland and leased 52% of all acres. Second, this probable under sampling was confirmed to us by a USDA Economic Research Service (ERS) staff member involved in the TOTAL survey (personal communication). Third, based on anecdotal evidence from prior surveys, we have sent to women landowners, we know they often pass these surveys on to either their male renter to fill out, or a male relative, for they believe, as one female landowner stated, they "don't know about farming" (personal communication). As Eells (2008, p. 181) has argued, "If women widely assume that men involved with women's farmland hold greater knowledge and expertise, they will refer researchers to men to respond to questions about land use and land management." Thus, while we know very little about agricultural landowners in general, we know even less about women agricultural landowners.

This lack of data is problematic for various reasons. First, the mission of the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Outreach and Advocacy Division is "to provide leadership to ensure that all programs and services are made accessible to all NRCS customers, fairly and equitably, with emphasis on reaching the underserved and socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers and landowners," (NRCS 2016). And the Farm Service Agency (FSA) Office of Program Education and Stakeholder Engagement states their "goal is to increase the participation of customers in FSA programs with targeted marketing activities to those who are underserved," (Farm Service Agency 2016). Yet, without data it is difficult to ascertain how and if underserved USDA customers—in this case WNOLs—are being served. Second, lack of data on agricultural landowners has potential detrimental implications for conservation implementation on the land, for as noted by Eells and Soulis (2013, p. 122A), "When we as conservationists do not know how many women own land or how much land they own, and have not taken care to understand the values and topics that matter to them, we perpetuate the current rate of practice adoption by repeating the same conservation outreach methods and messages without focusing our marketing messages effectively."

In forestry, the National Woodland Owner Survey (NWOS) regularly surveys forest owners from across the country about: the forest land they own, sources of information about their forests, their concerns and issues related to their forests, and demographics. The results of the NWOS are regularly used by government agencies to design and implement programs and policies that affect forest owners (United States Forest Service (USFS) 2012). However, comparable information on private farmland owners has never

been systematically collected by USDA. The focus by USDA has been much more on the farm operator, with little acknowledgement that the reality is more and more agricultural land is rented. In 1993, in a discussion on agricultural land, Geisler (1993, p. 533) noted, “Despite the central place of private ownership in American life, ideology, and culture, little summary information is kept on who owns what land over time.” Close to 25 years later, this statement still holds true, and is one of the contributors to a related WNOL issue—their invisibility to USDA agencies.

Invisible Women

Previous research has found NOLs are less likely to have personal contact with local extension and natural resource agency staff, leading to lower levels of resource management knowledge about local environmental conditions (e.g., Redmon et al. 2004; Petrzelka, Buman, and Ridgely 2009). This lack of contact is even more pronounced among WNOLs (Eells 2008; Petrzelka 2012).

Thus, female landowners provide additional challenges to those promoting land conservation goals. Although WNOLs in the Midwest have consistently indicated strong conservation values in surveys (Wells and Eells 2011), they report a lack of information and confidence in implementing conservation practices, often reporting that they feel intimidated or ignored when they ask USDA agency staff questions about land management or conservation. Female landowners of agricultural land in general tend to draw upon conservation organizations for information less often than male landowners, in part because the materials produced by these organizations do not resonate with the women landowners and they may not be familiar with language used when discussing conservation programs (Wells and Eells 2011). Eells (2008) found that conservation materials used by Iowa conservation outreach agencies and organizations do not appeal effectively to this demographic; for example, none of the photos in the brochures are of older women and the language tends to be technical and full of unfamiliar terms and acronyms. This then, contributes to WNOLs often feeling, and being, invisible to USDA agency staff.

This invisibility was made readily apparent to the project team while it was attempting to find WNOLs across the United States and invite them to participate in focus groups. Our team searched for USDA agency staff who work with WNOLs in California (a state which has several counties with rental rates of farmland over 60%—Bigelow, Borchers, and Hubbs 2016). We could not locate anyone in the list below who, if they responded to us, indicated that they (1) either know anyone who works with WNOLs directly or (2) work with WNOLs themselves, despite being the agencies and representatives which are the traditional avenues for conservation outreach²:

- University of California Davis, Dean of Extension Office
- University of California Cooperative Extension, North Bay Food Systems Advisor
- California Agricultural Experiment Station
- Natural Resources Conservation Service, California State Office
- Farm Advisor for University of California Cooperative Extension, Napa
- University of California Cooperative Extension Sustainable Food Systems Strategic Initiative Leader
- University of California Davis, Office of the Dean of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences

Women nonoperating landowners' invisibility contributes to less interaction by the women with local natural resource agency offices and lower levels of involvement in state and federal government conservation programs. For example, the 2014 TOTAL results show WNOLs are much less likely than male nonoperator landowners to participate in conservation decisions and programs on their land (Bigelow, Borchers, and Hubbs 2016). Those working in agricultural conservation policy should be very concerned about these findings, for they suggest that these agencies are not reaching the underserved populations that are a part of their mission and are missing out on potential implementation of conservation practices on the land.

What We Do Know

While existing research on WNOLs is extremely limited, both in terms of data and geographical representation, below we detail some patterns which are beginning to emerge that are useful for future policy formulation to engage WNOLs. We then discuss ways in which land management outreach can be revamped from the women's standpoints.

Past Research

Most of the existing knowledge on WNOLs is from studies conducted in Iowa and work done by the Women, Food and Agriculture Network (WFAN³), based in Iowa. The findings from these studies and WFAN have provided policymakers, researchers, and practitioners with a sense of what WNOLs in the Midwest look like and barriers they face as women agricultural landowners who are renting their farm to an operator. WFAN and its staff were crucial in indicating the need for land information messages and materials to be developed in a way that resonate with female landowners—including materials which contain photos of women as landowners, and discussion of land as not solely a commodity to be used, but an important aspect of family and community.

Women, Food and Agriculture Network has developed and used participatory, women-only learning circles in the Midwest to deliver information that informs WNOLs about conservation concepts and options and empowers WNOLs to take conservation action. Of 45 WNOLs who participated in the WFAN pilot project in Iowa in 2009, 50% took at least one conservation action within the following year. In the following years, WFAN completed 15 learning circles with 118 women in Iowa, Nebraska, and Wisconsin with 52% of the women making at least one change in farm management to improve soil and water conservation within 6–12 months (Adcock 2012). Research in adult education shows both men and women are most likely to take action when information is offered in this setting, and when they feel comfortable asking questions and sharing information with one another, as opposed to traditional classroom presentation style methods of information delivery (Eells 2008). This was also found in a study by Druschke and Secchi (2014, p.104), in their work in an Iowa watershed, showing that peer-to-peer learning such as looking to friends and neighbors for conservation information was strongly preferred by women landowners. From the past research, we have a good sense of what WNOLs in the Midwest look like demographically, the barriers they face as women landowners, and their preferences for outreach. Our work builds upon these previous research findings by extending the research geographically.

Extending the Research for Policy Development

Data collection with the WNOLs occurred during 2014–2016. We aimed for one WNOL meeting in each of the USDA Production Regions. Seven meetings were conducted⁴, and took place in North Dakota (representing the Northern Plains, $n = 5$), Minnesota (representing the Lake States, $n = 10$), Connecticut (representing the Northeast, $n = 7$), Louisiana (representing the Delta, $n = 3$), Texas (representing the Southern Plains, $n = 10$), Virginia (representing Appalachia, $n = 8$), and Indiana (representing the Corn Belt, $n = 7$). A total of 50 WNOLs participated in the meetings and are included in this analysis.

The WNOLs were purposefully selected, with a focus on women landowners who are NOLs and rent some or all of their land to an operator. In all but one case, the women were invited by local staff of nonprofit organizations who are working with WNOLs and were either personally invited or saw announcements placed in the local newspapers and in public spaces (e.g., grocery stores, post offices). In only one meeting did USDA agency staff assist the researchers (another indication of how little USDA staff are involved in working with WNOLs). The meetings lasted an average length of 3 h and were conducted over lunch.

Two methods of data collection were used in the meetings to gain information from WNOLs in our study—focus groups and surveys. Focus groups are a type of in-depth qualitative interview conducted to gain information through group interaction and to hear many points of view (Adler and Clark 2015). Focus groups were conducted to gather data from multiple WNOLs in an expedient manner and to allow group members to build upon responses of others. The senior author both facilitated and took extensive notes during the focus group session. The meetings began with the focus group, where the women introduced themselves, and talked about their experiences as women landowners in general, and then their experiences working with their renter and with natural resource agencies. After the focus group, the WNOLs then completed a survey which focused on landowner and land characteristics, use of federal and state resources for conservation programs and land management information, and preferences for outreach. This provided the study with both qualitative and quantitative data.

Responses from the focus group portion of the meeting were analyzed for cross-case differences and similarities. The dominant themes presented here are those consistent with the women across all regions. While none of the women were selected to be a statistically representative sample, the consistency of respondents' answers across demographic categories and geographic regions suggest that our findings reflect a reasonably comprehensive inventory.

Table 1 displays socioeconomic and land characteristics of the landowners. The average age of WNOLs in our study is 64, this older age consistent with demographics of WNOLs elsewhere (e.g., Duffy and Smith 2008; Eells 2008; Petrzalka and Marquart-Pyatt 2011). The WNOLs in our study range from 30 to 85 years of age, showing a large amount of age diversity among the women. In addition, while average acres owned was 560, the number of acres owned ranged from 8 to 4,500, again reflecting large diversity among the WNOLs. Approximately one-third of the WNOLs has a gross annual income of less than \$75,000. A little over half (54%) indicated they live on the land, for those who do not, the majority live 50 miles or more from their land, and 80% indicated the primary use of their land is crop production, again consistent with the studies of WNOLs conducted elsewhere (e.g., Eells 2008; Petrzalka and Marquart-Pyatt 2011).

Table 1. Socioeconomic and land characteristics ($N = 50$).

	Mean	Range
Age (in years)	64	30–85
Acres owned	560	8–4500
		Percent
Gross income [†]		
Less than \$25,000		10
\$25,001 to \$75,000		26
\$75,001 to \$125,000		36
\$125,001 to 175,000		12
\$175,001 or more		17
Live on land		54
Crop production main use of land		80

[†]Some categories are condensed, thus may not add up to 100%.

The women were provided a list of 12 topics regarding their land and asked about the level of interest in receiving information/technical assistance. The two *most important* topics focused on soil health (Table 2), with soil erosion control being the #1 topic of importance for the landowners and soil fertility improvement very close behind. Of the 12 topics provided, 7 of them had a mean of at least 3 (indicating the women were at least “interested”), and 6 of these 7 focused on conservation efforts and practices on the land. These results of a high level of interest in conservation by the women in our study are fairly consistent with research on WNOLs in the Midwest (e.g., Eells 2008). Despite these higher means though, the range on all items was from 1 to 4, indicating there were some women in the study “not at all interested” in receiving information/technical assistance while others were “very interested.”

For those WNOLs who are interested in receiving information/technical assistance, from whom and where do they go for this information? As shown in Table 3, the WNOLs in our study rely primarily on their renter for information regarding their land. While still some of the more important sources of information the landowners use when making decisions regarding their land, USDA agencies are not highly important. Only for the NRCS, Soil and Water Conservation Districts (a branch of NRCS), and the Cooperative State Extension Education and Research Service did the mean score of any agency fall above the scale midpoint, and these scores are only nominally above the midpoint of 2.5. That is, none reached the level of “important” in the eyes of the WNOLs we surveyed. In fact, in more than one focus group, women asked, “What is NRCS?” when the acronym was used.

Table 2. Level of interest in receiving information/technical assistance[†] ($N = 50$).

	Mean	Range
Soil erosion control	3.27	1–4
Soil fertility improvement	3.24	1–4
Incorporating conservation provision into leases	3.16	1–4
Water quality improvement	3.14	1–4
Government conservation programs	3.12	1–4
Negotiating farmland leases	3.04	1–4
Wildlife habitat improvement	3.02	1–4
Conservation tillage (i.e., no-till)	2.98	1–4
Pasture and hayland management	2.79	1–4
Conservation easements	2.77	1–4
Cropland management	2.53	1–4
Livestock management	2.27	1–4

[†]Ranges from 1 = not at all interested, 2 = somewhat interested, 3 = interested to 4 = very interested.

Table 3. Importance of information sources regarding land[†] ($N = 50$).

	Mean	Range
Renter	2.89	1–4
Natural resources conservation service	2.82	1–4
Soil and water conservation district	2.71	1–4
Friends/neighbors who farm	2.70	1–4
State university extension	2.58	1–4
Spouse/partner	2.53	1–4
Department of natural resources	2.42	1–4
Friend/neighbor(s) who live near land	2.38	1–4
State department of agriculture	2.23	1–4
Farm or ranch manager	2.21	1–4
Children	2.20	1–4
Sustainable agricultural groups	2.17	1–4
Farm bureau	2.02	1–4
Division of forestry, fire, and state lands	2.00	1–4
Dealers and/service providers	1.50	1–4

[†]Ranges from 1 = not important, 2 = somewhat important, 3 = important, 4 = very important.

The information question also yielded a diversity in the WNOLs' responses, with some indicating the various sources of information were "not important," while others indicated that same source of information was "very important."

The qualitative focus group data help provide insight into the survey findings. For those WNOLs who have used USDA agencies, they consistently noted barriers they face with them, including invisibility, as illustrated in these quotes:

"I need concrete and actionable information so I don't get dismissed as unimportant when I call USDA."

"[Despite being a landowner] when I called the local FSA office to obtain information about my land; FSA wouldn't even talk to me on the phone unless I brought in my marriage certificate to show I was married."

and difficulty in obtaining correct and full information;

"It is difficult to find out information about government conservation programs—there are inconsistencies between agencies, counties, genders."

"[there is a] wealth of inconsistent information about government programs. What men are told is different than what we typically hear as women."

"How do men get the information [from the agencies] we don't get?"

The quotes suggest these women are *trying* to get information, yet encountering barriers to receiving it. The quotes also show a dominant perception of the WNOL is that they are not receiving the same information male landowners are—perceptions that add credence to the invisibility argument presented earlier. If the USDA institutions are serious about widening their reach to the underserved, a change in the institutions needs to occur.

How then, does the USDA begin to go about developing outreach programs for women landowners? Our findings show that first, the women expressed a desire to have outreach meetings that contain very basic information for those who do not feel adequately prepared to be landowners:

"[I] need connections to people who can answer the questions, for those who have inherited the land but have no knowledge, [I am] left out in the dark about what to do ..."

“Seminars and workshops come at a level above me ... using acronyms I don’t understand ... we’re at 1st grade rather than high school level.”

“If you aren’t familiar with agriculture and legal terms [dealing with conservation program applications] can be an absolute nightmare, [I] need someone to go through the actual application with me.”

Second, the women want outreach that closely aligns with the desires of outreach materials noted by WNOLs in the Midwest (Eells 2008). As indicated in Table 4, when asked about interest in various outreach activities, “Having access to educational materials developed expressly for women like you,” received a mean of 3.5, midway between “interested” and “very interested.” This was followed closely by “Belonging to a network of women farmland owners who face similar challenges as you do,” (mean = 3.36), “Participating in free discussion with your peers on a regular basis to compare notes/chat with women conservation professionals,” (mean = 3.29), and “Working with a government agency in providing conservation services targeted to women landowners,” (mean = 3.16).

These survey findings echo what the women expressed in the focus group discussion—where some discussed how they force themselves to attend USDA agency meetings where they are often the only female in the room, and feel uncomfortable and intimidated doing so. Rather than this type of situation, women very much desired peer-to-peer learning:

“THIS [indicating the focus group meeting] is what we need right here—I don’t sit on the back of the pick up truck [to get information].”

“Have more meetings like this where you learn.”

“I had no idea there were other women like me, no idea other women had concerns, it’s heartening to know there are.”

Many were grateful “just to have the opportunity to sit and talk.” The desire for this contact with other women was also evident when, at some point in each of the meetings, one of the WNOLs would instigate passing around a sheet of paper for everyone to write their name and contact information, copies were made and passed out and the women were able to continue their conversations postmeeting. Finally, the fact that for many of the meetings, women were willing to drive over 2 h one way (and in some cases fly in!) for these 3-h meetings is yet another indication of how *hungry* these women are for information about being agricultural landowners.

Table 4. Level of interest in various outreach activities[†] (N = 50).

	Mean	Range
Having access to educational materials developed expressly for women like you	3.50	1–4
Belonging to a network of women farmland owners who face similar challenges as you do	3.36	1–4
Participating in free discussions with your peers on a regular basis to compares notes/chat with women conservation professionals	3.29	1–4
Working with a government agency in providing conservation services targeted to women landowners	3.16	1–4
Working with a private business that specializes in providing conservation services targeted to women landowners	2.40	1–4

[†]Ranges from 1 = not at all interested, 2 = somewhat interested, 3 = interested to 4 = very interested.

Conclusion

Women nonoperating landowners are an important group of agricultural landowners who have been too long and too often overlooked by federal agencies which are charged with working with *all* types of agricultural landowners. Given the women's conservation interests and the changing farmland ownership demographics, serious efforts are needed to get WNOLs on the radar and included in agricultural landowner policy. That is, we need intentional inclusion of WNOLs, both to right the long-standing marginalization of WNOLs and to get more acres into conservation.

From our study findings we provide three policy recommendations we believe can aid in this intentional inclusion. First, the USDA should undertake much more frequent and systematic surveys of NOLs—male and female—to better determine the level of understanding, needs and requirements for conservation and release the results for public use and consideration by federal agencies and interested constituencies. Second, we request a Governmental Accounting Office audit of the FSA and NRCS conservation programs to determine whether USDA is doing enough to provide equal access to women for all programs. Barring women from information until they provide a marriage certificate, while the exception rather than the norm, is discriminatory and illegal. Third, USDA needs to apply the growing body of knowledge based in these research studies with women farmland owners to develop a curriculum and suite of materials on conservation options that reflect the goals and values of women landowners. USDA could hire or partner with the NGOs who have been working in this area, building off of the groundwork that has already been done, in the development of these curriculum materials and in the training of NRCS field staff.

We know landowners of agricultural land are an increasingly diverse group. Thus, the institutional changes we recommend will benefit not only WNOLs but also all NOLs or any landowners who may identify in ways that challenge what has long been assumed normative.⁵ For example, these changes could better serve men who are NOLs, as well, and any groups who have not historically been privileged in institutional conservation programs. These changes could also benefit the operators renting from WNOLs. From ongoing work being conducted in the Great Lakes by the authors, farmers renting from women landowners expressed to us a desire to be able to communicate better with the landowners what they are doing on the rented land and why, in terms of land management. Policies such as we have proposed above would assist with this.

Let us be clear—this is not a call to “fix the women,” but a call to change the institutions and the institutional behavior detailed by the women, in this study and others. That is, it is not that WNOLs need extra special treatment or are slow to learn about conservation, or that anything is wrong with them, but that they have been historically marginalized and this needs to be rectified.

Obviously, not all WNOLs are represented in our sample here. The range in our data shows a diversity in terms of what the women want and have an interest in when it comes to information regarding their land. In addition, we are missing from our sample WNOLs who were unable to attend a meeting due to distance or those whose health would not allow them to attend. Further, there are parts of the United States that are not being represented in this study, with the failure to find WNOLs in the Pacific, Mountain, and Southeast USDA Production Regions. How to reach these women is unfortunately a question we have no answer to, for there is no comprehensive list of nonoperator landowners.⁶

Despite these limitations, this policy review extends the previous work that has been conducted on WNOLs and extends the research beyond the Midwest to other geographical regions. The findings clearly illustrate a critical point: It is the mandate of federal agricultural/conservation agencies to reach WNOLs; they are not. Our conservation professionals and policymakers must include WNOLs if we are to reach significant social and physical changes on the landscape. We believe the policies we recommend here would stimulate more work and innovative approaches to assist WNOLs in addressing resource concerns, putting them on the federal agricultural policy radar where they belong.

Notes

1. Iowa is the only state to systematically collect detailed ownership information on agricultural landowners.
2. The list contains only the names of public agencies/representatives, and specific county and individual names have been removed to protect privacy. In addition to reaching out to these traditional agencies in 2014–2015, we also reached out to numerous nongovernmental organizations but were unsuccessful in finding anyone either working with WNOLs or knowledgeable about anyone working with WNOLs. We faced similar challenges in the Mountain and Southeast regions of the country.
3. A nationwide group whose mission is to engage women in building an ecological and just food and agricultural system through individual and community power (wfan.org).
4. Meetings in the Mountain, Southeast, and Pacific Production Regions have not been conducted due to being unsuccessful in finding anyone either working with WNOLs or knowledgeable about anyone working with WNOLs.
5. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for this important insight.
6. While there are lists of NOLs that can be obtained, these are primarily only of those who participate in FSA programs, thus, eliminating a large number of NOLs who have not participated in such programs.

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