

Southern Rural Feminism: U.S. Women Farmers in Production Agriculture

Cassie M. Duncan 
Georgia Southern University, USA

April M. Schueths 
Georgia Southern University, USA

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18778/1733-8077.19.2.02>

Keywords:

Gender; U.S. Women Farmers; Southern United States; Southern Rural Feminism; Intersectionality; Agriculture Industry

Abstract: Although U.S. women's contributions to farming are vital, scholarship on U.S. female farmers is limited, especially in the U.S. South. Twelve women farmers in the Southern United States were interviewed about their experiences and opportunities in production agriculture. This study offers further nuance of the sociological and theoretical complexity and interpretive power of difference feminism and intersectionality, focusing on region and place, to a concept we call Southern Rural Feminism. Participants promote women's equality yet acknowledge gender differences between the binary gender categories of men and women, where the uniqueness of a woman's touch offers value to the agriculture industry. Nearly all participants' everyday life in southern agriculture was grounded in the participants' Christian faith, and some women used Christianity to explain gender dynamics. Within the context of the traditional rural southern culture, all women experienced differential gendered treatment in the industry, from welcomed gentlemanly behavior and gendered slights to more severe discrimination and harassment. Despite widespread gender problems, findings suggest most women do not view systematic gender oppression in the industry, do not adhere to feminist labels, and are cautiously optimistic about the future of female farmers. Incorporating theoretical discussions of Southern Rural Feminism is vital given U.S. Southern Farm Women's restricted material access to land, and full participation in production agriculture, a field with tremendous gender inequities.

Cassie M. Duncan, M.A., is a sociology instructor at Georgia Southern University. She earned her M.A. in social sciences, with an emphasis in sociology, from Georgia Southern University. Ms. Duncan's research is in rural sociology, focusing on gender, aging, and production agriculture. She has a peer-reviewed article published in the *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations*.

email address: cc14629@georgiasouthern.edu

April M. Schueths, Ph.D., LCSW, is a sociology professor at Georgia Southern University. She earned a Ph.D. in

Sociology and a Master of Social Work from the University of Nebraska. As a scholar, Dr. Schueths' research is on the intersection of race and gender with family, education, and health. She has peer-reviewed articles published in numerous journals, including *Children and Youth Services Review*, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *Latino Studies*, *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, *Critical Sociology*, *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved*, *Race, Education, and Inequality*, to name a few.

email address: aschueths@georgiasouthern.edu

The number of U.S. female farmers is growing dramatically. The 2017 Census of Agriculture found 1.2 million women producers in American agriculture, making up 36% of all producers, up 27% since 2012 (United States Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service [USDA, NASS] 2017). As of 2019, 51% of all U.S. farming operations included at least one woman (Whitt and Todd 2021). In 2009, undergraduate women are now enrolled in agricultural programs at Land Grant Universities in higher numbers than men (USDA 2012).

Despite the rising numbers of women in agriculture, glaring inequities persist. Further developing a rich sociological and theoretical understanding of gender inequity in agriculture clarifies how social structures and institutions shape women's farming experiences and opportunities. Horst and Marion (2019:3) studied historical structural discrimination in U.S. farming. They found that "Women of all racial and ethnic backgrounds experienced structural barriers to land ownership and farming" and confirmed that these inequities endure. Women continue to be underrepresented in agriculture compared to men, in particular those in positions of power and especially among Black women (Pilgeram, Dentzman, and Lewin 2022). While statistics about Black female farmers are not readily available, Lockhart (2021) estimates that Black female farmers make up less than 1% of farmers in the United States. Similarly, Fremstad and Paul (2020:124) call attention to the widespread gender pay gap in the U.S., where women earn about 40% less than men in agriculture; they suggest that "farming is among the most unequal professions."

Given the increase in female farmers and the micro and macro barriers they face, scholars point out the

need for additional research that provides a deeper understanding of the agriculture industry from female farmers' perspective (Ball 2014). Currently, most of the scholarship on women and farming is focused on developing countries (Schmidt, Goetz, and Tian 2021). The limited research done in the United States has yet to focus on the South. Beach (2013) states that interviewing farm women specifically about "roles in farming households" and "gender relations" in the agriculture industry would be beneficial and informative because it would allow for the perspective of women in agriculture to be seen and heard. Fremstad and Paul (2020:139) argue that more research needs to be done to investigate how the dynamic of women in agriculture has evolved, the barriers that entry female farmers may face, and what else can be done to "open the farm gate to women." Schmidt, Goetz, and Tian (2021) argue for further investigation into the types of support women need.

Even with inequities for women in agriculture, research suggests that because of negative stereotypes connected to the term "feminism," female farmers internationally are hesitant to identify themselves as feminists (Brandth 2002). This is particularly common among rural women (Neustaeter 2015). Identifying as a feminist for rural women may lead to exclusion and relational difficulties. Yet, Neustaeter's (2015:113) study of Canadian rural women found that even when women reject feminist identity, they display feminist characteristics. "Feminist language and action are often transposed into softer, subtler tones and actions rephrased as equality and fairness, which are quieter, held longer, and repeated, often over decades." Missing from this discussion are the unique experiences of female farmers living in the U.S. South.

This qualitative study fills a gap in the literature by examining how women farmers in the South-

ern United States, a geographically understudied area, describe their gendered participation and opportunities in the production agriculture industry. Production agriculture is a “series of activities that result in a product being sold,” including but not limited to livestock production, plant production, timber production, and other agricultural bi-product production (Minnesota Department of Revenue 2022). Pilgeram, Dentzman, and Lewin (2022:1352) suggest that distinctive U.S. regions need unique interventions for women in agriculture, “Different support strategies will be necessary for these different contexts.”

Our study identifies a concept we call Southern Rural Feminism, an extension of difference feminism and intersectionality, where participants do not identify themselves as feminists and adhere to a binary gender construct. They emphasize the inherent differences between women and men, arguing that women and men should not be seen as the same because of these distinctions, whether due to biology, religion, or Southern traditions. Yet, participants unobtrusively take on aspects of the feminist perspective, repackaging it and making it more palatable for their rural southern context. This qualitative research addresses how difference feminism and intersectionality combined, at the micro- and macro-levels, impact women farmers in the U.S. South. Incorporating theoretical discussions of Southern Rural Feminism is vital given U.S. Southern farm women’s restricted material access to land, and full participation in production agriculture, a field with tremendous gender inequities.

Literature Review

Traditionally, women in the agriculture industry have had a significant yet silenced role. Farm wom-

en have engaged in growing a summer garden, caring for livestock, selling produce, and taking part in intensive labor on the farm (Meares 1997:28-30). Historically, “women are the unpaid and invisible labor force” in the agriculture industry (Contzen and Forney 2017:27). Meares (1997:27) asserts that “while studies in the middle of the century tended to emphasize farm women’s roles as mothers and homemakers...research constitutes that this is mostly a narrow-sighted and partial view of the social reality” in the agriculture industry.

One aspect of invisibility is the struggle for women to have the title “farmer” instead of “farm wife” or other similar secondary terms. Keller (2014:76) points out how masculinity and femininity have been shaped over time by gendered symbolic categories of farmer and farm wife. She argues that women often face an “uphill battle in asserting themselves as farmers.” Beach (2013:212) explains that “traditionally, women on farms have been defined in terms of their marital relationship as farm-wives instead of in terms of their connections to the land, the farms, or their children as farmers, farm women, or farm mothers.” Hall and Mogyorody (2007:293) found that men in the agriculture industry tended to “underestimate their spouse’s contribution” to work done on the farm. This was similar to Beach’s (2013:212) findings that women in the agriculture industry were portrayed as “the supporter of the male farmer, the homemaker, or the one who raises the children and cares for the elders.” While men in the agriculture industry agree that women do have a place in the industry, they disagree over the value of contributions of women. The only way to help women identify as farmers is to “open the farm gate to women by shredding historically entrenched patriarchal roles and norms” (Fremstad and Paul 2020:125).

In addition to being overlooked and undervalued, female farmers face legal constraints. Fremstad and Paul (2020) discussed legal barriers that women faced, such as access to farmland. Married women in the United States were not able to own land under American Common Law until 1850. While women can own farmland today, it is still a scarce and expensive commodity, and there are new challenges that make acquiring farmland difficult for women, with many of these challenges remaining gender specific. Some of these barriers include financing markets, agricultural training, and education, suitable working conditions, and equal treatment by those in the industry, both individual and organizational (Kennedy-Duckett 2022).

Several lawsuits have been filed under the Equal Credit Opportunity Act (ECOA) against the USDA. Some of these most famous lawsuits include *Love vs. Vislack*, *Pigford vs. Glickman*, and *Keepseagle vs. Vislack*. These lawsuits were filed because the USDA was accused of “discriminating against African American, Hispanic, American Indian, and female farmers in various programs” that were offered to people working in the agriculture industry (USDA, Outreach and Advocacy Division [OAD] 2011). There is a “long history of structural discrimination in U.S. agriculture...[and] this history continues to impact farmers today” (Horst and Marion 2019:13). Specifically, the *Love vs. Vislack* case was a woman farmer class action settlement suit. It was filed in October of 2000 by several farmers who claimed they were discriminated against because of their gender when applying to farm loan programs (USDA, OAD 2011). The case was ruled in favor of the women farmers. Funds of \$1.23 to \$1.33 billion were set aside for women farmers who were successful in their discrimination claims (USDA, OAD 2011). Today, there are still disparities in the agri-

culture industry across race, ethnicity, income, and gender (Ball 2014; Contzen and Forney 2017).

The USDA (2021) claims that “women have been a critical part of farm and ranch operations across the country and across the globe for centuries.” Yet, the USDA has only been collecting data on female farmers since 1978, less than 50 years, but has been collecting data on men since 1840, for nearly three times as long (Fremstad and Paul 2020:127). Fremstad and Paul (2020) note that, despite the agriculture industry depending on women’s work all along, women continue to be missing from academic research.

A fair selection of rural sociological research discusses men and masculinities in the agriculture industry (Saugeres 2002; Nusbaumer 2011; Keller 2014; Anderson 2020). However, there is an absence of scholarship on women and femininities among U.S. women, even though U.S. women’s “contributions were essential to the viability of family farms” (Keller 2014:77). This is also true in the U.S. South.

Theoretical Framework

Our analysis begins with feminist theory, which recognizes the impact that gender dynamics play at the micro, mezzo, and institutional levels. Specifically, we draw from difference feminism and intersectionality—merging these two feminist perspectives helps highlight the intricate manner in which gender, class, race, and other social statuses intermingle to shape female farmers’ unique lives in the U.S. South. Difference feminism is a branch of feminism first articulated by Gilligan (1982), which emphasizes the moral, emotional, and cognitive differences between women and men and challenges the notion that women are morally, eth-

ically, and rationally inferior. Gilligan was silent on whether biology played a role in gender differences. However, some scholars have taken a biological difference perspective. Difference feminism posits that gender socialization leads women to be more relational and adopt traditional feminine qualities such as caregiving, emotionality, empathy, and nurturing in decision-making, arguing that because of these differences, men and women are equal but should not be seen as the same. Although traditional feminine characteristics are devalued, prioritizing traits perceived as masculine, such as individual rights and autonomy, especially in the workplace, these care ethic qualities are celebrated and made visible by difference feminists (Brandth and Haugen 1997).

Difference feminists argue for,

caregiving to be valued and for workplace structures to be redesigned for the female experience to be embraced. Rather than continue to push women to comply with male-defined expectations, pathways to leadership need to be restructured and cultural expectations need to be rewired in order to accept and reward women's differences. [Katz 2020:248]

Many women who adhere to difference feminism principles do not identify themselves as feminists. This is not entirely surprising, as nearly 40% of U.S. women do not identify as feminists (Barroso 2020). Research suggests that farm women, in general, are also less likely to embrace the label of feminism (Brandth 2002). Difference feminism has been critiqued for strengthening gender stereotypes by idealizing them and for being essentialists. Feminine ways of thinking and negotiating in the world are not a monolith and are impacted by individuals' different social statuses.

An intersectional lens also highlights differences (Crenshaw 1989) and contests race and gender exclusion among groups of people who are subordinated. Collins (2000:18) defines intersectionality as "forms of intersecting oppressions, for example, intersections of race and gender, or of sexuality and nation." Hill Collins' work critiques the black-white binary and "either/or" dichotomies. Instead, she describes the matrix of domination as an interlocking system of inequality and argues that individuals can occupy multiple contradictory locations as oppressors and oppressed.

Intersectional research is beginning to examine the diversity of individuals from dominant social locations, including conservative activist women's experiences (Avanza 2019; Yuval-Davis 2006), but is less common in female farmers in the United States, and especially the U.S. South. Intersectional analysis of farm women at the international levels has explored how gender, race/ethnicity, and marital status "create power relationships that influence farmers' positioning" (Tavener and Crane 2019:316; An-Vo, Shahbaz, and Cockfield 2022). Rushing (2017:293) points out that intersectionality research fails to examine place and region. She suggests "that paying attention to region and place offers an additional level of complexity and explanatory power for understanding social phenomena...as well as southern feminism."

The U.S. South has long been cast as problematic with its history of white supremacy and sexism (Rushing 2017). Contemporary surveys indicate that sexist attitudes toward women in the U.S. Southeast are higher than in other parts of the country (Charles, Guryan, and Pan 2022). The South continues to be seen as an exception to the rest of the more progressive country, with "no

place for a feminist,” and these conceptions continue to impact the direction of research in this region (Rushing 2017:306). Additionally, the Southern United States is often referred to as the Bible Belt and as the most religious area of the country, with most people in this region adhering to Christianity (Norman 2018).

Failing to examine the U.S. South maintains stereotypes and misses the “complexities of feminism, intersectionality, and place” (Rushing 2017:293). Incorporating an inclusive, feminist lens to women farmers’ experiences in the U.S. South is important as this analysis expands the theorizing on gender, feminism, and place by exploring lived experiences of 12 women farmers living in the U.S. South.

Methods

Setting

The U.S. South tends to have fewer female farmers compared to the western and northeastern United States. Yet, Southern states are heavily involved with the production of the agriculture industry and produce top commodities such as poultry, cotton, tobacco, blueberries, and dairy products (American Farm 2022). The Southern United States has nearly 118,000 farms run by women, including nearly 5 billion in sales with almost 13 billion in national sales (Hoppe and Korb 2013). For example, in Georgia, where most of the participants resided, 34% of farmers are women. Institutional gender inequity in agriculture has sociological consequences for women’s lived experiences and opportunities; examining the factors that draw women to agriculture and avoiding overlooking their stories is crucial.

Participants

Twelve women farmers participated in this study. Participants were required to meet the following qualifications to participate in the study: be at least 18 years of age, identify as a woman, live and work in the Southern United States, read, speak, and understand English, and have been involved in the production agriculture industry for at least three years before the interview. We wanted participants to have at least several years of agriculture experience so they were able to provide deeper insights and knowledge on the norms and practices that newer farmers may not have had.

The average participant was White, educated, married, lived and worked in the state of Georgia, and was raised on a family farm. Our recruitment strategy likely prioritized White participants. The authors identify as White women, and the first author was raised on a family farm with connections to the agriculture industry. We were unable to provide language interpretive services for non-English speakers, which likely excluded Latinx farmers. We may have missed important differences that would be apparent in a more racially diverse sample. At the same time, research (Wheeler et al. 2021) indicates that farmers may be reluctant to talk about personal issues with outsiders, and participants in our study stated that the first author’s lived experience put them at ease. The average age of the participants was 44 years old, ranging from their 20s to 60s. The size of farms varied in size and type and included plant production, livestock production, a honeybee farm, and a university research farm. A more detailed listing of the demographics of participants can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Pseudonym	Age	Race	Education	Marital Status	State	# Years Farming	Raised on Farm
Elenor	25	White	Bachelors	Engaged	FL	10	Yes
Kelly	39	White	Masters	Married	AL	9.5	Yes
Louise	41	White	Bachelors	Married	GA	41	Yes
Kimberly	28	White	Masters	Single	GA	28	Yes
Patsy	51	White	Masters	Married	GA	51	Yes
Christy	66	White	Masters	Married	NC	18	No
Madison	51	White	Bachelors	Single	GA	30	Yes
JoJo	51	White	Specialist*	Married	GA	3	No
Annie	37	White	< HS**	Married	GA	35	Yes
Carmen	33	White	Masters	Married	GA	33	Yes
Charlie	63	Black	Associates	Single	TN	5	No
Jessie	44	White	Bachelors	Married	GA	44	Yes

* A Specialist degree is an academic degree conferred by a College or University that is after a Bachelor's degree and before a Doctorate degree.

** Less than High School.

Source: *Self-elaboration.*

Data Collection

An IRB proposal was approved for this study by Georgia Southern University. In-depth, one-on-one interviews were conducted virtually by the first author through Zoom or on the telephone due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Interviews took place from February 2022 to May 2022 and averaged about 40 minutes, were audio-recorded and transcribed. The anonymity of the participants was kept by excluding any personal identifying information in the transcripts, such as places of employment or names of spouses. All participants were given a pseudonym to further protect their privacy.

Participants were recruited through word of mouth as the first author grew up in a farming family and shared recruitment information with farming networks, snow-ball sampling, and agricultural organizations and conferences, such as the Sunbelt Ag Expo in Georgia. Informed consent was collected from all participants before the interview took place. All interviews included a brief demographic survey at the beginning. Examples of the types of interview questions asked include "What is it like being a woman farmer in the agriculture industry?", "Do you think gender affects your opportunities in the agriculture industry?", and "Do men and women have different roles in the agriculture industry?"

Other questions explored how the intersections of race, gender, and religion affected women farmers' opportunities.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis, "a method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set," was used for this study (Braun and Clarke 2012:57). We use a contextualist method of thematic analysis, "sitting between the two poles of essentialism and constructionism" (Braun and Clarke 2006:86). Contextualist methods focus on the historical, social, and cultural backdrop of people's experiences and see meaning as created through socialization and impacted by history, norms, and power. Thus, we primarily used inductive coding, which allowed themes to emerge from the raw data.

The data analysis for this study started immediately after the first interview. We used NVivo software to help code and identify themes appearing through the experiences of the participants. For example, by looking for common, underlying themes between all the interviews in the data. The data analysis happened concurrently with the data collection to fully understand the data, as well as consider if other questions should be added to the interview schedule. After about four interviews, more questions were added, including, "What does feminism mean or not mean to you as a woman in agriculture?" and "Are religion and agriculture connected?" The above questions were added because, without prompting, the women farmers would talk about religion or not being a feminist. We did not re-interview the four participants as they had each already discussed issues related to religion and feminism.

The authors practiced reflexivity by positioning our backgrounds, social statuses, and biases to be open to different views. Both authors are White, cisgender, middle-class women. As mentioned, the first author grew up on a family farm and identified as Christian. In contrast, the second author does not have a connection to agriculture and does not practice Christianity. We used self-contained triangulation in which participants' statements supported or weakened their positions. We used peer review by having two sociology colleagues who study gender review the findings. Our rich, in-depth findings will allow sociologists and policymakers to better understand the experiences of southern women in the agriculture industry.

Findings: Southern Rural Feminism

Feminist theory, specifically, difference feminism (Gilligan 1982) and intersectionality (Crenshaw 1989; Collins 2000), combine and expand to help explain a geographical type of feminism (Rushing 2017) we call *Southern Rural Feminism*, a kind of feminism seen among women farmers in our study. Southern Rural Feminism follows a binary gender construct and posits that women and men have the same abilities. Yet, differences focused on gendered strengths and weaknesses exist, where a woman's touch offers some advantages for women farmers.

A Woman's Touch

Southern Rural Feminism posits that women can do anything men can, especially in agriculture. Kelly is a 39-year-old White woman who has been farming for nearly a decade. Like other participants, Kelly is self-assured that she can do anything a man can do. Kelly talks about her experience interviewing with a group of all men for her current position; she is the

first woman in this position on a university research farm. She describes the interview:

And since they can't approach the topic of my gender, I did. And I said, "Look, if you have concerns about me being a female, then don't hire me. I'm perfectly happy where I'm at. Can I do this job? Yes. Can I do it well? Yes."

Similarly, Carmen, a 33-year-old White woman who farms with her husband, says, "I can do just about anything that he can do. And sometimes I might even say even better, right?" This can-do attitude that indicates difference, almost a benefit among women, was present amongst many participants.

Although women reported having the same skills as men, the majority highlighted gendered strengths and weaknesses that often lead to unique responsibilities on the farm. Kimberly, a 28-year-old White woman, who was driving to her office after feeding cattle, echoes Carmen that women may possess some advantages compared to men.

I don't believe that men or women should be excluded from any opportunity within ag...There's a lot of male production farmers, but just because they're doing it, that doesn't mean that females can't plow a field or milk a cow as well...But, I definitely think there are some strong suits that women bring to the table that, you know, men may not always carry.

Participants expressed that being a woman in a work environment dominated by men is what made their contribution to their farm and the agriculture industry so exceptional. These unique gendered, maternal distinctions can be summed by Elenor, a 25-year-old White woman and the youngest of the participants in the study. She mentioned

"a woman's touch" throughout her interview. She explains that female farmers are strong-willed and passionate:

I think that the maternal female touch on stuff is what makes women in ag their influence so much more powerful...We don't even have to be mothers, but just like the woman's touch on everything. I think there's something to be said on that approach to a lot of business things.

Elenor was not the only woman who thought about nurturing or maternal instincts when discussing what it means to be a woman farmer. Christy, a 66-year-old White woman and the oldest of the female farmers, also discussed how women have a nurturing character that makes their contributions to the agriculture industry valuable. She states that "when men farm, a family will eat good. When women farm, the community eats good." She goes on to explain that women farmers care for others and the land.

Loving and nurturing the land came up with many women farmers, including Charlie, a 63-year-old Black poultry farmer. When Charlie was asked what characteristics or qualities a woman farmer has, she responded, "[women farmers] love the land, they maybe, there's a nurturing inside of you." She describes women farmers as "people that have a beauty within the feminine side."

Christianity

Gender differences and day-to-day life in agriculture in the South are often grounded in the participant's Christian faith. Participants mentioned Christianity in some contexts. Women discussed they rely upon God in many circumstances because

of the uncontrollable elements, such as weather and insects, in the agriculture industry.

Elenor, a 25-year-old White woman, believes the differences between men and women in the agriculture industry are positive. She insinuates that some of these differences are due to Christian values, which support Southern Rural Feminism. Elenor explicates:

I mean, we were designed, biologically designed, differently. To think differently. To act differently. I think there's a lot of judgment because of how things have always been, so to speak, on how women approach things versus how men do it.

Kelly, a 39-year-old White woman, states while talking about the farm she grew up on, "Pray for rain, then you prayed it would stop raining long enough to get the crops out the field." Kelly continues talking about her faith as she comments that she believes the "Lord'll provide no matter what."

Kimberly, a 28-year-old White woman, supports Kelly's perspective that agriculture and Christianity are traditionally tied together and explains:

Personally, I don't know any farmers that aren't Christians. Because, in my opinion, it's very hard to be a farmer and not be a Christian and see life and death and the peaks and valleys and the miracles on the farm. I know that sounds a little cliché, but it's taught me to be able to live with a lot of those things.

Madison is a 51-year-old White woman and fourth-generation farmer who owns and operates a cotton gin. She thanks God every day that she wakes up, has a beautiful day, and that the crops

are growing. She says, "I do think it [religion] plays a part...[for] the majority of the people who do farm. I think it's a big part of it."

U.S. Rural Southern Traditions

The U.S. rural Southern traditional context was connected to a particular type of gender traditionalism. All women experienced treatment ranging from being discounted, being discriminated against, to being put on a pedestal by men. All participants in this study referenced the traditionality of the agriculture industry in the South and how traditionalism impacts women farmers; some aspects of this traditionalism were viewed as positive. A 51-year-old White woman, Patsy, appreciates being treated like a Southern lady. She explains how difficult it is to open a gap gate on the farm, which is a gate that holds a lot of tension and is built of wire and a wooden post. It takes a fair amount of strength to open a gap. Patsy expresses that while she is capable of opening a gap, she is "kind of thrilled that I'm still married to a man who's, you know, he still believes in southern chivalry, and he'll jump off and get that for me."

On the other hand, rural southern traditions can sometimes be problematic. Jessie is a 44-year-old White woman and is often assumed not to be a farmer when she's with her husband, who also farms. "They automatically think that if you are a woman in South [state], you are a teacher or a nurse. So, I do think women get put in that box that that's the only thing they can do."

A 66-year-old White woman, Christy, has had a similar experience to Jessie. "People, like, if they want to know who's in charge, they always assume it's my husband, and he's not. I mean, I run the

business. He definitely helps.” Christy describes the South as a “very White, religious, red area.” She later explains that she would like to see more diverse people in farming and that she enjoys having access to a larger variety of products. Christy acknowledges how challenging it is for younger farmers to get access to land, but takes a gender and color blindness approach (Collins 2017) and suggests, “I don’t care whether you’re man, woman, what color you are.” When asked about opportunities in the industry, Kimberly, a 28-year-old White woman, states, “it can be discriminated upon very quickly, especially for us being in the Bible Belt.”

Charlie, a 63-year-old Black woman, started her farm herself and had no ties to agriculture except for some ancestors she had never met. Charlie says, “I don’t think there should be [different roles], but there seems to be.” She is one of three women in this study with no prior connection to the agriculture industry and the only Black participant. She explains how some women can feel threatened by other women in the industry. Although she sees the benefit of more women farmers, she mentions some bad experiences she had with women. She says, “I think we’re just trying to load up numbers, but I have worked with women that have destroyed other women. Just destroyed them. You understand?” Charlie describes what she often observes:

It seems to be he’s out there working the farm. She’s doing the books. That’s typical. She may go out and help him with a few things...But, by and large, when I’ve helped or volunteered or whatever, she’s coming out ‘cause she’s like, “Oh, there’s a woman out there.” Yes, honey. I’m not trying to take your husband, okay? I’m out here trying to learn about this shit that I don’t know because I didn’t have time to be on a farm.

While some participants write off their environment as “traditional roles within their family business” or people just being “stuck in the old ways,” it is easy to see the adverse effects. For starters, women farmers feel they are not always treated fairly or given the same level of respect as men farmers, despite being equally or more educated than men farmers. All but one participant held higher education. However, this does not seem to make much difference in how women are treated or respected in the agriculture industry. Kimberly, mentioned above, discusses that women in agriculture are not always taken seriously and that women are not given the same credit as men.

I’ve had some very rough conversations...I do think the level of respect is often different, especially being in agriculture in the South, you kind of get some of that traditional roles. It’s not always popular to have a woman in the workplace. I mean, obviously, things evolved some in 2022, but when you’re with those farmers, sometimes that’s not always as easy because they grew up very traditional and still maintain a lot of those old-school traditions.

Kimberly discusses the “traditional roles” in the agriculture industry, which include women not driving the tractor or operating farm machinery, women not being the primary farm owner and operator, or women not attending agricultural meetings such as Cattlemen’s Association Meetings or Farm Bureau meetings. The “traditional roles” for women may look like more secretarial roles on the farm, marketing and selling the farm product, and assisting the primary farm operator with a clear distinction of who the primary farm operator is. Like Kimberly, Elenor, a 25-year-old White woman, discusses how her gender affects her opportunities in the agriculture industry through “imposed ceilings” or

expectations placed on her because she is a woman farmer. Elenor is in beef production, which she calls a “man’s world,” and mentions that men are often threatened by women in charge. She recalls a conversation:

Somebody told me one time, “Well, since you’re a woman, you’re not always going to be able to be on the back of a horse, like, you’re gonna have to find an office job somewhere,” and I was like, “I just don’t think so.” I don’t think that’s how it works. I think you set your mind to something, and you do what you want. So, I would say there are, like, superimposed ceilings that the industry puts on you...You’re treated differently because they [men] don’t think you’re capable.

Being treated differently was a common experience for women farmers. This often looked like other farmers not thinking you were qualified, being called inappropriate names, or not being listened to. For Kelly, a 39-year-old White woman and the head of a university research farm, and co-principal farm operator with her husband, being treated differently meant that men farmers and farm workers offered her help more often, even with simple farm tasks such as backing up a trailer. Kelly provides an example of working with men in the industry:

We have a really long trailer at work that’s actually a hay hauler, and the first time I ever drive it, one of my farm crew was trying to help guide me when I was backing it to unhook it. And I was like, “Okay, stop. I appreciate what you’re doing, but this will go much faster if you go back to the shop and let me do this myself.”

Likewise, Carmen, a 33-year-old White woman, who has worked in multiple agriculture sectors

and is at least a third-generation farmer, tells of an experience she had at an agricultural meeting. Carmen walked into the room for the meeting, and “they came up to me and said, ‘Would you like to join [the women’s version of the agricultural organization]?’ And I said, ‘Well, what does that mean?’” Women farmers embrace their femininity, but do not want to be looked at differently in the workplace. Multiple women farmers discussed the reality of working with men at these agricultural meetings. For instance, Jessie, a 44-year-old White woman, talks about how she walked into a room full of older White men for a meeting. After walking in, she received the remark, “Well, don’t you add color to the room?” She says they were acting as if “[I] don’t really need to be there, like, you know, ‘What are you doing here? Well, you add color to the room..’ And [I] was kind of like, ‘Yeah, that’s why I’m here.’” Charlie, a 63-year-old Black woman relates that when she tells people she’s a woman poultry farmer, they tend to underestimate her:

They think I have, you know, like ten chickens in the back, and I’m picking up eggs. I’m like [laughs], no. More like 300 to 500 layers. Okay? Meat birds. Yes, eggs are being laid, but I’m selling chicks. I’m selling pre-layers. They’re [men farmers] like, “What? You’re 24 commercial?” Yes, is that a problem? [laughs] They’re not expecting that.

Charlie was the only Black woman farmer who participated in this research. She shares the discrimination she has faced in the agriculture industry, though she is unsure if it is because of her race, gender, or a combination of both. Multiple identities leave Charlie with a different experience than the White women farmers in this study. She discusses an instance where she went into a feed store where she experienced some “pushback” because “they

couldn't embrace me." Charlie explains her surprise at learning that discrimination is embedded within agriculture:

[Discrimination] is infused into the vein...it's more than the fiber of this country. It's too much. [Sigh] I didn't think about ag because I'm thinking you have to eat, and there's food, and whoever the hell is doing it, right?... But, I never expected ag, for some reason. How silly was I to think it couldn't be there, too? And it's, it's a fair amount, unfortunately.

What Charlie is describing here is institutional and systematic racism. While the White women farmers in this study may make light of some of the mistreatment and discrimination, it is present in the production agriculture industry and appears highlighted when gender and race (Blackness) combine.

Differential treatment also included gender-based discrimination in hiring. Annie, a 37-year-old White immigrant woman and farmer who has been driving a tractor since the age of three years old, talks about how a man farmer would not employ her because "he didn't want women on his farm. He always claimed he didn't want to make accommodations...it was just his rule, like, he would just not hire women."

Two participants also labeled their experiences as sexual and verbal harassment. Louise, a 41-year-old White woman, works in plant production and often attends agricultural expos, fairs, and meetings. She explains, "I was hesitant entering agriculture and opening a business...you know, it's a rural county, and sometimes, sometimes the older generation is slow to adapt." She recalls going on a three-day agriculture show to showcase her products, but ended up being spoken to inappropriately—something

that would have been far less likely to happen to a man in this industry. She remarks:

On the second day, this d-, I have no nice words for this human. This human from [state] looked me up and down like a piece of meat. And just, I mean, called me sugar britches. And I was like, "You are disgusting." And I held my own. I fired right back at him.

Louise continues her story by saying how another exhibitor, who was a man, stepped in on her behalf. The man who called her "sugar britches" ended up getting kicked out of the agriculture show. She concludes her story, "I definitely felt it was a good and bad feeling. One, I knew that he had my back, but at the same time, did he jump to my defense because he thought I couldn't hold my own?" Similar to Louise, Elenor, a 25-year-old White woman, describes her experiences with working with men in the agriculture industry. She says:

Oh man [deep exhale]. Whether they [men] know it or not, I mean this [pause]. There's a lot of sexual harassment that goes on both knowingly and unknowingly. There's a lot of like, "Oh, are you sure you should be doing this?" And, and this and that... I just think there's a lot of deep-seated opinions, emotions, and kind of boundaries that you stay in, in the ag industry.

Although the women all had gendered mistreatment in the agriculture industry, most participants were quick to point out that mistreatment was the exception and not the rule. Louise suggests, "There's a few bad eggs everywhere, you know... but that's not the majority of the folks we run into... So, I mean, you have stuff like that, but we got so many good people in our industry."

Roughly half of the participants talked about the good men in the industry. These were often relatives such as husbands, brothers, uncles, fathers, and grandfathers. It was clear that having a paternal familial tie was an important part of these women's lives on the farm. Not only because it made farming more accessible but also because of the support they received. It is also important to note here that while having a paternal tie offers more support and potentially a broader network, women still typically rely on other men for entry into the production agriculture industry. For example, Kelly says that when she thinks of a farmer, she often thinks of "my dad and granddad in a hayfield." Like Kelly, Elenor talks about a negative experience with men in the agriculture industry, but she follows up with an example of a good experience. She observes:

There's also some [men] that are so proud of you for, like, paving the way because, like, especially if they have daughters. If they have daughters, then they see it as like if she can do it, my kid can do it kind of deal. But, I've definitely had both ends of the spectrum of, like, being taken advantage of because you're a woman and being very respected.

Louise, a third-generation farmer, talks about her relationship with her grandfather who was "a dirt farmer, and a peach farmer, and a cattleman." She describes him and other men farmers she interacted with in childhood as generous and loving. She was just four years old when her grandfather encouraged her interest in agriculture. Louise points out, "My grandfather always, I was always told I could do anything. Anything. Like, and he always, he, he totally reinforced that." She recounts a story of how he gave her the freedom to experiment:

There was a strawberry patch in my grandparent's front yard...They would harvest those strawberries

and sell them...It got time to dig up those strawberries. They weren't producing as well as they should... Granddaddy said, "Well, what are we going to do here, baby?" and I said, "We're gonna plant seeds in a circle"...And he said, "Okay," and that's what we did, right in the middle of the front yard. [Laughs]

Having a significant family member, specifically a man in agriculture, helped to build a foundation for many of the women farmers in this study. Whether it was a husband, father, or another close relative, the women expressed how extraordinary those bonds were to their success in agriculture.

Rejection of Feminism

Despite consistent stories of harm, most women reject the notion of systematic gender oppression and are quick to defend the agriculture industry as a mostly friendly place for women. Participants advocate for gender equality but see no need to take on the feminist label. This would only alienate men who have created important career pathways for them. Maintaining harmonious relationships in agriculture with both women and men is the ideal, perhaps reminiscent of a woman's touch living in the traditional rural South.

Women farmers described their rejection of feminist identity. Elenor, a 25-year-old White woman, asserts, "I am in no way, shape, or form a feminist." When probed about what being a feminist means, Elenor mentions faith as a backdrop to her views, explains that gender diversity is helpful in agriculture, and that she would not rebuff a man's assistance, as a so-called feminist might do. She says, "But being, not being a feminist to me just means that I'm not, I'm not shutting men out from being able to help me just because I think I can do it myself."

Charlie, a 63-year-old Black woman farmer, is also cautious about shutting out men. She thinks of Gloria Steinem, a White women's rights activist, when she thinks of feminism, and she understands why the feminist movement was needed "back in the day," and admits some problems with gender equality continue, but also sees the downside.

I also feel like the feminine, the feminist movement can be negative if you don't have some opening to what it means for the mass human side because, to me, you can be feminist or feminine and not feel like you have to push them [men] out... But, I also think that you have to have, there's got to be a, a way of opening the door so that we both [women and men] can exist.

JoJo, a 51-year-old White woman and honeybee farmer, was asked to describe what feminism meant to her. She became hesitant, and her body language became uncomfortable. JoJo says, "I'm not a feminist, first of all. I think that when, anytime that there's a conversation about that, this topic, people get intimidated." She continues explaining how feminism, especially in their Southern context, often threatens men and women:

I think in the South, there are more, probably women have been suppressed and they're just in progress by choice often. I don't think they, and I'm thinking about women that I know. My friends of mine, my family's, whatever. I don't think they necessarily want to move into leadership roles that men are traditionally in.

Patsy, a 51-year-old White woman, and many other women farmers concur that feminism has a negative connotation for them. Many women farmers see feminism in radical lighting that is harsh and abrasive, not the type of relationship they want with other men farmers in the industry.

Madison, a 51-year-old White woman, says, "Yes, I'm proud to be a woman. I'm proud to be a woman in the agriculture industry that is predominantly dominated by men, and I'm not gonna back down...but I'm not gonna go to the extreme." Carmen, a 33-year-old White woman, who was happily weighing 1,300-pound steers three days before giving birth to her child, describes feminism as needing a balance. She remarks:

I ultimately think that women have the same rights as men. But, just as much as a man needs to learn to listen to a woman, in a, we'll say professional setting, a woman needs to learn to keep her mouth shut, too. So, I mean, it's a give and take.

Feminism, for many participants, was equated with discarding men. Women farmers, even those who verbalized support for gender equality, did not want to be cast in the stereotypical role of a man-hating feminist. This is not surprising when you consider that men are often the gatekeepers or the perceived gatekeepers to farming opportunities.

Cautious Optimism for Women in Agriculture

Ultimately, most women farmers are optimistic about the future, and many desire to see more women in agriculture and leadership. A few women even mentioned how there rarely is a woman U.S. Secretary of Agriculture and how they felt a woman could be capable of that position. The United States had one woman Secretary of Agriculture, Ann Veneman, in 2001 (USDA 2022). Women farmers want to see women involved with the USDA, the Farm Service Agency (FSA), and other major agricultural organizations. Louise says, "The future for women overall is very bright in ag...I'd also love to see a new generation of women step up and take hold, you know, and start these farms."

Although women are growing in number, gender roles are still persistent. Madison, a 51-year-old White woman, explains that we will continue seeing men on the manual labor side of the industry, but women farmers will be doing the marketing, selling, and other office work. The reasoning she gives for this is the physical differences between men and women. The physical and biological differences between men and women are a concept that comes up throughout the interviews.

Kelly, a 39-year-old White woman, discusses the importance of mentorship and leadership of other women within the agriculture community. Kelly and six other women hosted a “southern women in ag hands-on workshop” in different parts of her state, where they taught other women various farming tasks, such as backing up a trailer, operating farm equipment, and driving cattle. She explains:

I want to say we did four different workshops that were always full...The demographics were all over the board, and those were the most fun when you just had the young and the old. I believe one lady said she was in her eighties, and she wanted to come and just drive a tractor...So, it was very good, even networking experience.

Kimberly, a 28-year-old White woman, also talks about how it helps to have connections with other women in agriculture. She talks about how her county has a local agriculture extension agent, who is a woman and a close friend. She explains how women in leadership positions could help the future of women in agriculture when she says:

Women are not always taken seriously at their first, say, at things. And so, if there’s a woman in a leadership role, she might be willing to lend an ear to

a younger woman who’s got something to say that can make an impactful difference in a business. So, I would really love to see more women in ag leadership roles.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study broadens and nuances the sociological and feminist theoretical context of meaning-making for Southern women farmers by combining difference feminism (Gilligan 1982) and intersectionality (Crenshaw 1989; Collins 2000) to a focus on region and place (Rushing 2017) to a concept we call Southern Rural Feminism. Participants verbalize women’s equality yet acknowledge perceived gender differences, often framed as strengths and weaknesses between the binary gender categories of men and women, where the uniqueness of a woman’s touch is understood as maternal and offers value to the agriculture industry. “A woman’s touch is expected to be caring, servile, and responsive, whereas a man’s touch is supposed to be predatory, controlling, and expert” (Hancock, Sullivan, and Tyler 2015 as cited in Cheded and Skandalis 2021:341).

Interesting tensions and ambiguities present themselves in this seemingly contradictory space where women engage with a form of feminism, but also reject the view of what they construct feminism to be. Nearly all participants’ everyday life in southern agriculture was grounded in the participants’ Christian faith, and some women used Christianity to explain differing gender dynamics. To be clear, Christianity is not exclusive to women farmers or even female farmers in the U.S. South and continues to be the most reported U.S. religion (64%), but is declining (Pew Research Center 2022). At the same time, research indicates that the U.S. South tends to be more religious and specifically Christian and has

a greater level of sexist attitudes than other parts of the U.S. (Norman, 2018; Rushing 2017; Charles, Gu-ryan, and Pan 2022).

Within the context of the traditional rural southern culture, all women experienced differential gendered treatment in the industry, from welcomed gentlemanly behavior and gendered slights to more severe discrimination and harassment. The majority of mistreatment was from men, with only a couple of instances of ill-treatment from other women, including the only Black woman in this study. Despite widespread gender problems, findings suggest most women do not view systematic gender oppression in the industry (Sachs 1983), do not adhere to feminist labels (Alan and Sachs 2007), and are cautiously optimistic about the future of women in agriculture, especially when women support and mentor each other.

Women farmers in this study were raised on a farm, and many were intergenerational farmers with ties to men who helped pave the way for their entry. For example, Louise, a White, third-generation farmer, recounts the support she received from her grandfather when learning to farm, “I was always told I could do anything. Anything. Like, and he always, he, he totally reinforced that.” Louise is the same woman who recounted harassment at an agriculture expo, referred to by a man as “sugar britches.” She quickly pointed out that abuse was not the norm and said, “There’s a few bad eggs everywhere, you know.” Participants generally expressed gratitude toward paternal family members as they seemed to experience overwhelming support, which may have led them to minimize the multitude of negative experiences from other men in the field. Participants viewed feminism as rejecting men and wanted no part in this. At the same time, they inconspicuously

adopt many features of feminism, but seem to minimize it and make it more acceptable for their rural southern context. Their feminism does not include excluding or hating men. Perhaps this is a survival strategy—without relational networks of men farmers and at least some reliance on the traditional farming norms, women may have an even harder time accessing full integration into production agriculture, including land, equitable pay, and occupational environments free from discrimination. Christianity adds a layer of complexity—inherent in this belief system is often a patriarchal framework (Whitehead and Perry 2019) that further explains gender differences as natural or ordained by God.

Specific to our study, all the participants except one identified as White women, which reflects U.S. agriculture demographics (Lockhart 2021). All White women, except for one immigrant woman, have at least a bachelor’s degree and more than half of the educated White women hold graduate education. White women in this study were much more likely to have grown up on a farm. Gender and whiteness paired with a farming background, which generally includes networks with men, higher education, and marriage to a man (Tavener and Crane 2019; An-Vo, Shahbaz, and Cockfield 2022), which might be the recipe for more opportunities in southern agriculture. Similar to Beach (2013), we found that women struggled to be identified as farmers and were often seen as farm wives or farm helpers. Many of the women farmers discussed how instead of being addressed themselves, often another accompanying man (such as a husband, father, or uncle) would be addressed instead—even if that man knew little about the farm.

Finally, this study identified discrimination also found in previous scholarship (Horst and Marion

2019; Fremstad and Paul 2020). Some women discussed how they felt they were treated differently in USDA or FSA offices because of their gender, and that this may have led to a lack of funding or quality services. Two participants labeled their experiences as gender harassment, and several other women described this. In line with Sachs, Jensen, Castellanos, and Sexsmith's (2021) recommendation, future research must examine pervasive harassment in the agriculture industry.

More research needs to focus on Black female farmers living and working in the South. Charlie was the only Black woman farmer interviewed. While she shared many views with the White participants, she was the only person who voiced the impact of the intersection of gender and race on her experiences in agriculture. The White women in this study tended to take a colorblind approach, believing that hard work and perseverance is the key to success in farming.

References

- Alan, Patricia and Carolyn Sachs. 2007. "Women and Food Chains: The Gendered Politics of Food." *International Journal of Sociology of Agriculture and Food* 15(1):1-23.
- American Farm. 2022. "Commodities by Region." Retrieved April 17, 2023 (<https://www.americanfarmmortgage.com/about/commodities-by-region.html>).
- Anderson, Joseph L. 2020. "'You're a Bigger Man': Technology and Agrarian Masculinity in Postwar America." *Agricultural History* 94(1):1-23.
- An-Vo, Duc-Anh, Mushtaq Shahbaz, and Geoff Cockfield. 2022. "Nuanced Assessment of Livelihood Resilience through the Intersectional Lens of Gender and Ethnicity: Evidence from Small-Scale Farming Communities in the Upland Regions of Vietnam." *Journal of Rural Studies* 92:68-78.
- Avanza, Martina. 2019. "Using a Feminist Paradigm (Intersectionality) to Study Conservative Women: The Case of Pro-Life Activists in Italy." *Politics & Gender* 16(2):552-580.
- Ball, Jennifer A. 2014. "She Works Hard for the Money: Women in Kansas Agriculture." *Agriculture and Human Values* 31(4):593-605.
- Barroso, Amanda. 2020. "61% of U.S. Women Say 'Feminist' Describes Them Well; Many See Feminism as Empowering, Polarizing." *Pew Research Center*. Retrieved April 17, 2023 (<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/07/07/61-of-u-s-women-say-feminist-describes-them-well-many-see-feminism-as-empowering-polarizing/>).
- Beach, Sarah S. 2013. "Tractorettes or Partners? Farmers' Views on Women in Kansas Farming Households." *Rural Sociology* 78(2):210-228.

In conclusion, our research adds a new layered perspective to the literature on women in agriculture by contextualizing Southern rural feminism and how it impacts U.S. Southern female farmers' experiences. Although the number of women in U.S. agriculture is growing and steps have been made to increase equity in the industry, our participants describe continued gender inequality, but do not identify the inequities as systematic. Gender barriers in agriculture are seen as individual-level problems that can be overcome with a feminine touch, passion, confidence, and hard work, and with what we call Southern Rural Feminism.

Acknowledgments

We extend our sincere appreciation for the feedback on a previous draft of this paper to Drs. Marieke Van Willigen and Clare Walsh, and the editorial board of *QSR*.

- Brandth, Berit. 2002. "On the Relationship between Feminism and Farm Women." *Agriculture and Human Values* 19(2):107-117.
- Brandth, Berit and Marit S. Haugen. 1997. "Rural Women, Feminism and the Politics of Identity." *Sociologia Ruralis* 37(3):325-344.
- Braun, Virginia and Victoria Clarke. 2006. "Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology." *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3(2):77-101.
- Braun, Virginia and Victoria Clarke. 2012. "Thematic Analysis." Pp. 57-71 in *APA Handbook of Research Methods in Psychology*, vol. 2, edited by H. Cooper et al. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Charles, Kerwin Kofi, Jonathan Guryan, and Jessica Pan. 2022. "The Effects of Sexism on American Women: The Role of Norms vs. Discrimination." *Journal of Human Resources*. doi: <https://doi.org/10.3368/jhr.0920-11209R3>.
- Cheded, Mohammed and Alexandros Skandalis. 2021. "Touch and Contact during COVID-19: Insights from Queer Digital Spaces." *Gender, Work & Organization* 28:340-347.
- Collins, Patricia Hill. 2000. "Gender, Black Feminism, and Black Political Economy." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 568(1):41-53.
- Collins, Patricia Hill. 2017. "Intersectionality and Epistemic Injustice." Pp. 115-124 in *Handbook of Epistemic Injustice*, edited by J. Medina. New York: Routledge.
- Contzen, Sandra and Jeremie Forney. 2017. "Family Farming and Gendered Division of Labor on the Move: A Typology of Farming-Family Configurations." *Agriculture and Human Values* 34:27-40.
- Crenshaw, Kimberle. 1989. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex." *Feminist Legal Theory* 1:57-80.
- Fremstad, Anders and Mark Paul. 2020. "Opening the Farm Gate to Women? The Gender Gap in U.S. Agriculture." *Journal of Economic Issues* 54(1):124-141.
- Gilligan, Carol. 1982. *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Hall, Allen and Veronika Mogyorody. 2007. "Organic Farming, Gender, and the Labor Process." *Rural Sociology* 72(2):289-316.
- Hoppe, Robert A. and Penni Korb. 2013. "Characteristics of Women Farm Operators and Their Farms." *USDA-ERS Economic Information Bulletin* no. 111.
- Horst, Megan and Amy Marion. 2019. "Racial, Ethnic, and Gender Inequities in Farmland Ownership and Farming in the U.S." *Agriculture and Human Values* 36(1):1-16.
- Katz, Lauren T. 2020. "Tearing Down the Maternal Wall in the Legal Profession: A Perspective Inspired by Difference Feminism." *The Georgetown Journal of Gender and the Law* 22:213-250.
- Keller, Julie C. 2014. "I Wanna Have My Own Damn Dairy Farm! Women Farmers, Legibility, and Femininities in Rural Wisconsin, U.S." *Journal of Rural Social Sciences* 29(1):76-102.
- Kennedy-Duckett, Maryellen. 2022. "The Barriers Women Face in Agriculture." *National Geographic*. Retrieved April 17, 2023 (<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/culture/article/partner-content-empowering-female-farmers>).
- Lockhart, Kassaundra S. 2021. "Black Women Are Aiming to Change the Landscape of Agriculture." *Women Advance*. Retrieved April 17, 2023 (<https://www.womenadvancenc.org/2021/02/25/black-women-are-aiming-to-change-the-landscape-of-agriculture/>).
- Mearns, Alison. 1997. "Making the Transition from Conventional to Sustainable Agriculture: Gender, Social Movement Participation, and Quality of Life on the Family Farm." *Rural Sociology* 62(1):21-47
- Minnesota Department of Revenue. 2022. Retrieved April 17, 2023 (<https://www.revenue.state.mn.us/guide/defining-agricultural-production>).
- Neustaeter, Robin. 2015. "Situated Feminism, Rurality and Women's Learning in Rural Manitoba, Canada." *Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education* 27(2 SE):100-119.
- Norman, Jim. 2018. "The Religious Regions of the U.S." *Gallup News*. Retrieved April 17, 2023 (<https://news.gallup.com/poll/232223/religious-regions.aspx>).
- Nusbaumer, Michael R. 2011. "Rural Masculinity and Antique Tractors: Reliving the Men in the Machines." *Journal of Rural Social Sciences* 26(2):101-125.
- Pew Research Center. 2022. "Modeling the Future of Religion in America." Retrieved April 17, 2023 (<https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2022/09/13/modeling-the-future-of-religion-in-america/>).

- Pilgeram, Ryanne, Katherine Dentzman, and Paul Lewin. 2022. "Women, Race and Place in US Agriculture." *Agriculture and Human Values* 39(4):1341-1355.
- Rushing, Wanda. 2017. "No Place for a Feminist: Intersectionality and the Problem South: SWS Presidential Address." *Gender & Society* 31(3). doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243217701083>.
- Sachs, Carolyn. 1983. *The Invisible Farmers: Women in Agriculture Production*. Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Allenheld.
- Sachs, Carolyn E. et al., eds. 2021. *Routledge Handbook of Gender and Agriculture*. London, New York: Routledge.
- Saugeres, Lise. 2002. "Of Tractors and Men: Masculinity, Technology, and Power in a French Farming Community." *Sociologia Ruralis* 42(2):142-159.
- Schmidt, Claudia, Stephan J. Goetz, and Zheng Tian. 2021. "Female Farmers in the United States: Research Needs and Policy Questions." *Food Policy* 101. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodpol.2021.102039>.
- Tavener, Katie and Todd A. Crane. 2019. "Beyond 'Women and Youth': Applying Intersectionality in Agricultural Research for Development." *Outlook on Agriculture* 48(4):316-325.
- United States Department of Agriculture. 2012. "Study: Undergraduate Women Outnumber Men in Land-Grant Ag Programs." Retrieved April 17, 2023 (<https://www.usda.gov/media/blog/2012/07/24/study-undergraduate-women-outnumber-men-land-grant-ag-programs>).
- United States Department of Agriculture. 2021. "Women in Agriculture." Retrieved April 17, 2023 (<https://www.usda.gov/our-agency/initiatives/women-agriculture>).
- United States Department of Agriculture. 2022. "Former Secretaries." Retrieved April 17, 2023 (<https://www.usda.gov/our-agency/about-usda/history/former-secretaries#>).
- United States Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service. 2017. Retrieved April 17, 2023 (<https://www.nass.usda.gov/AgCensus/>).
- United States Department of Agriculture, Outreach and Advocacy Division. 2011. Retrieved April 17, 2023 (https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/nrcs141p2_015583.pdf).
- Wheeler, Rebecca et al. 2021. *Loneliness and Social Isolation in Farming Communities: Summary of Research Findings*. Retrieved April 17, 2023 (https://fcu.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Loneliness-social-isolation-in-farming_FINAL-01.11.21.pdf).
- Whitehead, Andrew L. and Samuel L. Perry. 2019. "Is a 'Christian America' a More Patriarchal America? Religion, Politics, and Traditionalist Gender Ideology." *Canadian Review of Sociology* 56(2):151-177.
- Whitt, Christine and Todd, Jessica E. 2021. "Women Identified as Operators on 51 Percent of U.S. Farms in 2019." *USDA Economic Research Service*. Retrieved April 17, 2023 (<https://www.ers.usda.gov/amber-waves/2021/june/women-identified-as-operators-on-51-percent-of-us-farms-in-2019/>).
- Yuval-Davis, Nira. 2006. "Intersectionality and Feminist Politics." *European Journal of Women's Studies* 13(3):193-209.

Citation

Duncan, Cassie M. and April M. Schueths. 2023. "Southern Rural Feminism: U.S. Women Farmers in Production Agriculture." *Qualitative Sociology Review* 19(2):30-49. Retrieved Month, Year (http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/archive_eng.php). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18778/1733-8077.19.2.02>