

JULY 2002



منظمة الأغذية  
والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

联合国  
粮食及  
农业组织

Food  
and  
Agriculture  
Organization  
of  
the  
United  
Nations

Organisation  
des  
Nations  
Unies  
pour  
l'alimentation  
et  
l'agriculture

Organización  
de las  
Naciones  
Unidas  
para la  
Agricultura  
y la  
Alimentación

## EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURE (ECA)

### ELEVENTH SESSION OF THE WORKING PARTY ON WOMEN AND THE FAMILY IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Fribourg, Switzerland, 14-17 October 2002

### THE ROLE RURAL WOMEN PLAY IN SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND

by Dr Sally Shortall

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. While there is a substantial body of research on farm women, there is less systematic work on women in rural areas. This is not a problem unique to Northern Ireland (NI); it is identified as a problem in other countries and regions, and indeed at the general European level. There are many practical difficulties with researching rural women and women in farming. A serious obstacle is the lack of statistical information. This is a problem throughout the European Union<sup>1</sup>. In addition, there is a continuing debate about what rural actually means, demonstrated by regional variations in definitions; and women in rural areas are not themselves an homogeneous group. They have distinctive varied lifestyles, incomes, needs, interests, and family situations. There is no such thing as the generic rural woman, in the same way there is no generic rural man or urban woman, yet there is a tendency to think of women who live in rural areas in this way. Another tendency is to think of women in rural areas as a uniformly disadvantaged group. The British Equal Opportunities Commission have classified rural women as such (Clark, 1997). Yet women in rural areas have different resources and needs, and not all are disadvantaged. Research (Shortall, 1999; O'Hara, 1998; Alston, 1995, MacKenzie, 1992) indicates that rural women are largely happy with their lives, committed to living in rural areas, and strongly believe that relocation to an urban centre would mean deterioration in their quality of life.

2. It would be nonsensical to suggest that rural and urban women do not face many of the same issues. Educational qualification, resources, social class and other social factors strongly influence the position of women in society, regardless of whether they live in rural or urban areas. Nonetheless, location does matter. There are particular features of rural life that impact on women. Childcare provisions are a concern for all women, yet childcare provisions in rural areas

For reasons of economy, this document is produced in a limited number of copies. Delegates and observers are kindly requested to bring it to the meetings and to refrain from asking for additional copies, unless strictly indispensable.  
Most FAO meeting documents are available on Internet at [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)

pose particular questions because of population density and travel. The same is true of employment policies. Rural Development Programmes have a defined rural focus, and they may or may not impact on men and women differently. Farming is an occupation peculiar to rural areas, and it too holds particular implications for women. Farming is traditionally perceived as a male industry. Women and women's work tends to be invisible in farming and agriculture. Shortall (1997, 1999) suggests this is because women do not have access to or control over land and that typical entry into farming for women is through marriage. While only seven percent of farmers in Northern Ireland are female (Agricultural Census, June 2000), the reality is that the majority of farms in NI depend on the income and labour of the whole family, not just the male farmer and paid labourers alone.

3. Women in NI do play a central role in ensuring the sustainability of agriculture through their on and off-farm work. Women also play a key role in developmental work in rural areas. However this case study will illustrate that in both instances, despite favourable equality legislation in NI, women's work is under-represented and they continue to be structurally excluded from the agricultural and rural development sectors.

4. Women in agriculture and women in rural development initiatives are treated separately in this paper. This is because in the first case it is women's role in a particular occupation that is examined, and in the second instance it is women's role in spatially designed development programmes that is considered. These two cases of women refer to different sets of statistics, representation in different organisations, and require different policy recommendations. Both share a culture of gender inequality.

## **II. AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND**

5. Farms in NI are largely owner-occupied family businesses. There are approximately 32,000 farms, and the average size of holding is 35 hectares. Eighty eight per cent of farm units are classified as small or very small<sup>2</sup>, and seven out of ten are in less favoured areas. Dairying, Cattle and Sheep<sup>3</sup> are the main farming activities. The number employed in agriculture has declined dramatically in recent years, falling by 3.2% from 1994-1998, and by a further 2% in 1999-2000 (Agricultural Census, June 2000). Currently, five per cent of civil employment is in agriculture. This decline is in line with trends in most developed countries. Part-time, casual and seasonal workers account for an increasing amount of agricultural employment. In 2000, 43% of farms were classified as part-time (Agricultural Census, 2000). The income of the NI agricultural industry shows a dramatic fall every year. The total income from farming has fallen by 79% in real terms since 1995 (Davis and Shortall, 1999). In 1999/2000 only cereal and dairy farms recorded a profit.

6. The estimated value of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in Northern Ireland is three hundred million pounds per year (450 million Euros). The Structural Funds Plan, and the ex-ante evaluation<sup>4</sup> identified the heavy reliance on direct payments as a major threat. The ex ante evaluation notes that the Berlin agreement on CAP Reforms has left the agricultural sector still heavily dependent on publicly funded support with no clear signal as to the future direction of support policy and exposed to likely challenge in the World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations. Further liberalisation of agricultural support and trade will require structural adjustments from the agricultural sector to meet these challenges and will, inevitably, place additional strains on the rural economy and rural communities.

7. With the possible exception of some elements of dairying, much of agriculture, especially in the more marginal areas, would not be viable without subsidies and other additional sources of income. On many of the smaller cattle and sheep farms, usually located in the more disadvantaged areas, net farming income consists almost entirely of compensatory payments. The

CAP provides two main forms of support; market (or price) support, estimated to be worth about one hundred million pounds (150 million Euros), and direct payments, estimated to be worth two hundred million pounds (300 million Euros). Market support refers to EU restrictions on import access, subsidies on exports, and supports to the domestic market through intervention buying and aids to private storage. Direct payments refer to premiums, headage payments and arable aid paid directly to farmers. CAP Reforms aim to reduce both market support and direct payments. The CAP Reforms agreed under the Berlin Agenda 2000 agreement will continue this policy. The CAP is considered an untenable policy in an enlarged EU. In addition, it is trade distorting and does not meet the terms of the WTO. Given the heavy reliance of farms in NI on subsidies, further reforms of the CAP have serious implications for the survival of farm families.

8. However, the current difficulties experienced by the farming community are not only linked to CAP reforms, but also to the Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) crisis, the Foot and Mouth Disease crisis, the impact of sterling's appreciation on foreign exchange markets, and the recent downturn in international agricultural commodity prices (Structural Funds Ex-Ante Evaluation, 1999, 3.40). Northern Ireland relies heavily on its beef export market. Both the BSE crisis and Foot and Mouth disease have resulted in serious beef export restrictions.

9. In brief, as the Structural Funds Plan outlines, many sectors of agriculture are in crisis and existing farm based employment and self-employment may not be sustainable. The Plan states that there is a need to find new structures and approaches to countryside management and to generate alternative employment for both men and women in rural areas. Research indicates that it is women who seek off-farm work in the first instance. For this reason falling farm incomes have particular gender implications.

### *Rural Development*

10. EU rural development programmes<sup>5</sup> signal an attempt to move away from sectoral support measures (primarily agriculture) to a more area-based or territorial approach to development. Rather than supporting a single industry in a rural area, the emphasis is shifting towards bringing people in an area together to work out a more inclusive development plan. Rural development became a higher funding priority for the European Union in the 1990s. In common with the rest of the EU, NI devised an institutional apparatus to manage rural development initiatives, and area-based activity has flourished since (Davis and Shortall, 1999<sup>6</sup>).

11. The Agenda 2000 Agreement identified rural development as the 'second pillar' of the CAP, indicating the increased emphasis being given to rural development (Regulation EC 1257/1999). The main area-based rural development initiatives funded by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD), under the remit of the Rural Development Division (RDD), relate to Article 33 of the new Rural Development Regulation. These are funded from the Guidance section of the European Agricultural Guarantee and Guidance Fund (EAGGF/FEOGA). It is worth noting that while there is increasing emphasis given to area-based rural development and it is expected that this will continue, it is not matched by a commensurate amount of funding. While the annual value of CAP is estimated to be 450 million Euros in NI, the budget for the Rural Development Programme is 130 million Euros for the entire period 2000-2006<sup>7</sup>.

12. An ongoing issue in NI is the extent to which rural development continues to be tied to the restructuring of agriculture. For example, the references to rural development in the Structural Funds Plan tend to be (but not exclusively) linked to the problems of agriculture. For example, the Employment Priority states that many people working in agriculture are at risk of losing their employment because of changes in the sector and this priority will reinforce the emphasis on rural development. The need to improve the access of both men and women in rural areas to education and training and to develop new sectors of the rural economy is constantly emphasised.

### III. EQUALITY LEGISLATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND

13. While the EU has long maintained a commitment to gender equality, the entry into force of the Amsterdam Treaty in May 1999 integrated gender equality into the foundation of the Community. In addition to the general EU gender equality agenda, and the specific requirements of the Structural Funds to promote equality of opportunity between women and men, equality legislation at Member State level remains important. There is considerable scope for members to implement these requirements within their own institutional and legislative frameworks. Northern Ireland has developed sophisticated legislation on equality mainstreaming based on a participatory-democracy model<sup>8</sup>. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998) is the key piece of equality legislation. This imposes a statutory duty on listed public authorities in Northern Ireland to generate an approved equality scheme, and to carry out equality impact assessments on all new and existing policies. One of the strengths of Section 75 is the requirement that this must be done in consultation with individuals and groups from the nine categories identified in the act. In other words, any consideration of rural women in NI is framed by a context of a strong commitment to gender equality.

### IV. WOMEN AND AGRICULTURE

#### *Socio-cultural role in the farm family*

14. The general perception of farming in Northern Ireland is that an individual farmer runs a farm, and he is a man. Throughout most of Europe this is untrue, with family farms being the norm, and many women living on farms work full or part-time in the farm business. Women's typical entry to farming, and to the farm family, is through marriage. Women's whole relationship to farming is shaped by their route of entry and position within the farm family. It affects women's role in farming organisations and in the politics of farming.

15. The understanding of women's role in farming is shaped by inheritance and women's entry to farming. Land is transferred inter-generationally within families. It is a transaction mediated by cultural norms, and land is typically passed from father to son. Acquisition of land is based on sex, and we see the very foundation of different positions for men and women on farms being formed. Men constitute the constant family line through which land is passed, and women float in and out. Not having independent access to land influences women's position within the family and within the public space of farming. The embeddedness of the social and cultural norms regulating the transfer of land from father to son means that the gender discriminatory nature of this practice frequently goes unnoticed. Unlike other occupations where there is an under-representation of women, targeting education will not alter the number of women entering farming as they must have access to the key resource, land, to farm. However, it is possible to recognise the role of women on farms to a greater extent, try to more accurately reflect their work, and provide appropriate training. DARD has made some attempts to recognise the role of women, yet a considerable amount remains to be done.

#### *Statistics on farm work*

16. The Agricultural and Horticultural Census for Northern Ireland (carried out every June, and sometimes referred to as the June Census), details the number of people employed in agriculture, and the number of hours they work. Until 1992, the June Census used the categories 'farmer' and 'wife'. Recognising the assumption this made that the farmer is male, DARD changed the 'wife' category to 'wife/husband' in 1993, and in 1994 to 'spouse'. Most workers returned as spouses are women. For instance, let us consider the number of full and part-time farmers, and full and part-time farmers' spouses in the June Census 2000. It tells us that 24% of

people working on farms are women. Of this 24%, 19% are classified as 'farmers' spouses'. Ninety four per cent of farmers' spouses are women. Thirty six per cent of women who are classified as farmers' spouses work more than thirty hours a week on the farm. They are classified as full time farmers' spouses. In other words, even when working full time on the family farm, women are recorded as a full-time spouse (status by marriage), rather than as an individual worker (Shortall and Kelly, 2001; Kelly and Shortall, 2002).

17. Qualitative research has consistently illustrated that women do more work on farms than agricultural statistics indicate (First Report of the Fourth Joint Committee on Women's Rights, Dublin, 1994; Gasson, 1992; Reimer, 1986; Shortall, 1999). This is partly because some of the work that women do on farms is difficult to quantify; taking spare parts of machinery for repair, bringing samples of grain to have moisture levels checked before harvesting, feeding farm labourers or being a relief worker. The description of Agricultural/ Horticultural Work in the June Census states that it:

*Includes care of crops and livestock, managerial, supervisory and office work, preparation and marketing of produce, maintenance (ditching, etc.) Excludes gardening, housework, work on capital investments (i.e. on new buildings).*

18. It is difficult to see how the work that qualitative research highlights can be accounted for under these definitions. It is reasonable to assume that when the June Census reports 24% of people working on farms are women, it is a conservative estimate.

19. The June Census requires one principal partner to be named. There are no explanatory notes accompanying the June Census, but it is generally understood that the person who does most work, and makes the decisions is returned as the principal partner. There is no scope to return two principal partners. If there are two people equally running the farm, they are returned as 'other' partners. Women who returned themselves as farmers' spouses could have returned themselves as other partners. However, the three listed categories are 'Farmer or principal partner', 'Spouse of farmer or principal partner (if working on the farm)', and 'Other partners in this farm business'. It is not unreasonable to assume that if women are married to a farmer and work on the farm, then the spouse of farmer would appear to be the appropriate category within which to return their work. This illustrates the subtle processes and practices that impede the accurate statistical recording of women's farm work.

20. Both the June Census and the Labour Force Survey report women working on farms in terms of their family status rather than as individuals who work. The June Census returns them as 'farmers' spouses', and the Labour Force Survey returns them as 'unpaid family workers'<sup>9</sup>.

### ***Agricultural education and training***

21. The overall student body of Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) Colleges for 2000/2001 comprised 42% women and 58% men. A higher percentage of women do food and equine courses (food hygiene, food processing, etc.) than men. Both of these courses lead to employment that does not require owning land. Given the inter-generational transfer of land to sons, it would be unusual if many women were full-time agricultural students, seeing as they lack the key resource needed to farm. In 2000/2001, ninety three per cent of full-time agricultural students were male (DARD, Statistics Division, 2000). Because of women's route of entry into farming, it is likely that lifelong training is the most relevant form of education for them. In the early 1990s, four women agricultural advisers decided to form specific training groups for women on farms as they found it difficult to encourage women to attend existing provisions, which women perceived as being for 'the men'. This development is auspicious in that training is being provided for women, but it remains ad hoc (Shortall, 1999; 1996; Equality Commission, 1999). Research (Shortall and Kelly, 2001) indicated that women perceive lifelong training as a

provision for men on farms because notification of training is addressed only to men, and never to women. The view of education and training providers is that while efforts are being made to include women, continued work is needed on this front. There is a stated commitment to increase the provision and participation of women on farms in training programmes, but as yet existing random provisions have not been mainstreamed, and nor is lifelong training monitored. A strategy has yet to be formalised.

### ***Women and farm diversification***

22. There is some evidence to suggest that women pursue farm diversification initiatives in the first instance. In light of this, it is imperative that information about diversification initiatives reaches men and women on farms to increase their efficacy. However, research indicated that while some men and women were positive about the possibility of farm diversification, the majority talked about their reluctance to undertake initiatives because of the risk involved and the need for capital investment, which many do not have (Shortall and Kelly, 2001). In addition, support and mentoring needs to be incorporated into projects, not only to ensure that the projects get off the ground but also that the projects are maintained and continue. In general, the structure of agriculture in NI does not provide the necessary capital to pursue farm diversification, and off-farm work is a more frequently pursued strategy.

### ***Farm women and their off-farm work***

23. As of yet there is no statistical information available on the number of women who work off the farm, although what research does exist indicates that possibly up to 50% or more of women work off the farm (Moss, 2000; Shortall and Kelly 2001). Women and men who participated in a study by Shortall and Kelly (2001) were adamant their farms would not be viable without women's off-farm work. It has been observed that in many cases the primary motivation to work off the farm is to provide supplemental income to the farm income, in order to be able to continue farming. Women undertake off-farm work as part of a farm family survival strategy (Kelly and Shortall, 2001, 2002). Their motivation is the continuation of the family farm, and their husbands' occupation. There was little indication of off-farm work that was individually motivated, or of women perceiving this as an individual income. Rather it was seen as a contribution to the very low farm family income. Women are committed to the survival of the farm, and to the maintenance of their husbands' mental well being. Their off-farm work far from representing a distancing from the farm business, represents a strategy to ensure its survival. There is little evidence to suggest that women's off-farm work has led to any renegotiation of childcare roles, household work or on farm responsibilities. Rather it is another work role that women have assumed. There is some evidence of men finding it difficult to reconcile themselves with their changed status from being the breadwinner of the farm household. Women are committed to their families and their farms, and engage in survival strategies to maintain the survival and well being of both. They add off-farm work to their other work roles in the face of declining farm incomes. In a peculiar sense, it is women's off-farm work that keeps farming male. This comes at a high price for men, to which the level of farm suicide and depression attests. As CAP Reforms are likely to increase the extent of part-time farming, the gender implications of this policy needs further consideration.

## V. WOMEN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND

24. While the available information is limited, the general perception is that women are under-represented in rural development initiatives. This is an issue of concern for both the EU, which identifies them as a target group for LEADER+<sup>10</sup>, and more locally for DARD, who express a stated commitment to redressing the under-representation of women in rural development initiatives in their strategy documents. The reasons why women are under-represented in rural development initiatives pose a different set of questions than for women in agriculture. The involvement of women in rural development initiatives is not constrained by land ownership. Rural development is increasingly emphasised as the 'second pillar' of CAP Reforms. It is important, then, to identify the extent to which women do participate in rural development initiatives and any barriers that may exist, in order to ensure that an increased emphasis on rural development is not gender discriminatory. As will be outlined this requires gender disaggregated statistical data, an examination of how to ensure the structural inclusion of women's development work, and consideration of 'barriers' to participation.

### *Women and rural development : the statistics*

25. The existing information on women's participation in rural development initiatives is extremely limited. An examination of the gender breakdown of information available for the main rural development initiatives in NI showed that no baseline information exists to assess the extent of participation by women in rural development initiatives (Shortall and Kelly, 2001). No information exists on the number of women involved in project applications. Employment created is not broken down by gender. This situation is about to change, because of EU regulations and because it is necessary to develop monitoring procedures to meet the requirements of the Equality Legislation. However, given that the EU is entering the third phase of many programmes, and given the continued stated commitment to increasing the representation of women in rural development initiatives, it seems very late in the day to begin gathering the most basic baseline information.

### *Women's participation in the rural development process*

26. As already stated, while little baseline information exists, the general view is that rural development initiatives do not seem to have attained a gender balance. At an organisational level, there is also a gender imbalance: both of the main rural development organisations have an under-representation of women on their management boards and at senior management levels (Shortall and Kelly, 2001; Shortall, forthcoming b.). The same is true of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD).

27. Yet, in NI, a well-established Women's Sector has developed and consolidated for over twelve years. The Women's Resource and Development Agency is a Non-Governmental membership based organisation comprising over 100 women's networks, groups and agencies working on equality issues across Northern Ireland. This includes Rural Women's Networks that undertake development work with women in rural areas. It is estimated that over 1,500 women are members of the Rural Networks. Approximately 10,700 women a year are accessed to local learning opportunities through these Networks, including provisions such as political education, information technology training, and facilitation skills Women's Resource and Development Agency and the Rural Women's Networks Strategic Plan, 2001. Rural development organisations report that where a Women's Network exists there is greater participation by women in general community initiatives.

28. Given this level of activity and engagement with and by rural women, why is it assumed that women need to be 'involved' in rural development initiatives? Clearly rural women are actively engaged in development work. The problem relates to the definition of 'development' and the assumption of the male norm. Work that is undertaken within the framework of rural development initiatives, and funded through these programmes, is considered development work. Much of women's work does not fall neatly within the stipulations of these programmes in order to qualify for funding. These are the programmes handled by DARD and the two main rural development organisations. Mainstream development programmes represent the male pattern (Rosilli, 2000), and it is against this that women's participation is judged. Against this male norm, the work of the Women's Networks is not recognised as development work, but rather it is seen as some kind of progressive social activity by women for women. The Women's Networks believe they are perceived in this way and they are constantly asked to 'prove' the value and necessity of their work, in a way that is not expected of other developmental organizations (Shortall and Kelly, 2001).

29. Funding is available for mainstream rural development initiatives. However, the work of the Networks does not neatly fit into this framework and consequently, they rely on a varied and tenuous source of funding. The EU actively supports funding rural development work initiated and implemented by women (European Commission, 2000; p. 10). However in NI rather than recognising and resourcing the work of Women's Networks, their value is overlooked alongside pleas for the increased involvement of women in rural development initiatives.

30. There is considerable scope for the structural inclusion of the Rural Women's Sector. For example, in order to ensure more efficient use of the current round of European funding, Local Strategy Partnerships have been established. While these partnerships (including those in rural areas) state the inclusion of women as an objective, the new Local Strategy Partnerships (LSPs) do not have a designated seat for the Women's Networks. Recognising and supporting the infrastructure that already exists is an important means of ensuring the representation of women in general rural development initiatives.

### ***The barriers to women's participation in rural development initiatives***

31. Both men and women identified women's traditional household and childcare duties as barriers to women's participation (Shortall and Kelly, 2001). Meetings tend to be at night-time, and cut across prime childcare time. Travelling to meetings can be off-putting, particularly during the winter. Some women also commented that they are so busy with work commitments, family ties, elder and child care, and social and voluntary work, that they simply do not have the time to take on any more commitments. While men active in rural development initiatives did identify women's domestic and care responsibilities as barriers to participation in rural development, there was however no evidence of this understanding translating into more flexible meeting times, crèche facilities or subsidised elder care.

32. Research on men and women's participation in organisations illustrates the prevalence of gender segregation (Popielarz, 1999; McPherson and Smith-Lovin, 1986). Rural research has indicated that women tend to be more involved in social and community development initiatives as opposed to economic development initiatives (Bryden et al, 1996; Shortall, 1999). There has always been a certain ambiguity about the value of economic development versus community and social development (Shortall, 1994; 1996, and Shortall and Shucksmith, 2001). While the value given to economic development has always been clear, the value given to social and community development that does not lead to economic development has always been more ambivalent. This debate seems to have particular implications for women, given that the main focus of their work is the latter form of development.

## VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

33. Women in NI do play a central role in ensuring the sustainability of agriculture through their off-farm work. Women play a key role in developmental work in rural areas. However socio-cultural patterns of land transfer and the organisational culture of the agricultural establishment continues to frustrate the greater participation of women in the industry and recognition of their role in a sustainable agriculture and rural development. Similarly, despite the imaginative and extensive work of the Rural Women's Networks, women are structurally excluded from rural development initiatives. Favourable equality legislation exists and positive changes are expected. Nonetheless, it is essential to continue monitoring development programmes and projects in order to ensure that they incorporate favourable gender relations.

34. Women's route of entry into farming means that without care and attention their work and often central role in maintaining the family farm goes unnoticed. Women's farm work continues to be under-stated. The statistical categories used are out-dated and do not reflect farming lives. Under-reporting women's farm work means an inaccurate understanding of the extent of farm work. However it is now women's off-farm work that is of most significance in ensuring the survival of the family farm. One common, and key, difficulty faced by farm women and rural women is the lack of gender disaggregated information available. This is a problem in Northern Ireland, but it has also been identified as a problem at a European level. Adequate baseline information about the lives of women on farms and women who live in rural areas is not available.

## VII. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

35. For both farm women and rural women, it is essential that gender equality is integrated at all stages of forthcoming programmes and measures. Specifically:

- Measures should include gender equality as part of project selection, monitoring and indicators;
- Goals/markers (i.e. % of women that participated in the programme) should be included to assist the evaluation of programme effectiveness;
- Specific actions targeted at women should be developed to complement mainstreaming, if there is a gender gap;
- The timing and location of meetings, childcare and elder care provisions must be seen as essential ingredients of any strategy to attain gender equality.

36. Agriculture is a predominantly male industry. Women's route of entry to farming means that without care and attention their work and often central role in maintaining the family farm goes unnoticed. Therefore, the following issues need to be addressed:

- More inclusive and contemporary definitions of farm work are needed in order to make women's farm work visible;
- Statistical categories need careful examination to ensure they do not inadvertently reinforce gender inequalities;
- The agricultural establishment must reflect on organisational practices that discriminate against women, and indicate strategies to redress discriminatory practice;
- Given women's strategies to obtain off-farm employment, it is necessary to ensure flexible training and employment provisions for women of all ages;
- The restructuring of family farming has social effects as well as economic effects. Increased reflection on the social impacts of restructuring and its effect on gender relations within the household is necessary.

37. CAP Reforms increasingly emphasise rural development as its 'Second Pillar'. Women are identified at EU and National levels as an under-represented group in rural development programmes. Policies need to be mindful of the following:

- Baseline statistical information on women in rural development must be gathered in a consistent and comprehensive fashion. The gaps in gender disaggregated statistics include areas such as management of rural development initiatives, employment generated by rural development initiatives, and access to funds provided by programmes (i.e. who were successful and unsuccessful applicants to programmes);
- A more critical analysis of how 'gender awareness' and concern about the under-representation of women are being translated into practice is needed;
- Attention needs to be given to how rural development programmes unfold to ensure that they do not structurally exclude women by taking men's participation and ways of working as the norm.
- Most importantly, the recognition of the women's infrastructure that exists is imperative. The structural inclusion of this infrastructure into current programmes would immediately acknowledge women's developmental work and improve the representation of women in rural development initiatives.

38. To conclude, through the examination of the role women in Northern Ireland play in sustainable agriculture and rural development, issues of more general concern for women in the rest of Europe are also emerging. Women do play a central role in ensuring the sustainability of agriculture through their on and off-farm work. Women also play a key role in developmental work in rural areas. However, as illustrated above that in both instances, despite favourable equality legislation, women's work is under-represented and they continue to be structurally excluded from the agricultural and rural development sectors.

Notes:

1. This was identified at The New Challenge of Women's Role in Rural Europe Conference, Cyprus 4-6 October, 2001.
2. Less than 8 ESUs (Structural Funds Ex Ante Evaluation, 1999).
3. Cattle and sheep; 70% (54% in less favoured areas), dairying: 16%.
4. The Structural Funds Plan for Northern Ireland is the European Commission agreed document setting out the EU Structural Funds supported Operational Programmes and Community Initiatives for Northern Ireland in the current planning period (2000-2006). All approved Structural Funds Plans must contain an Ex Ante evaluation of the plan. This is an evaluation of the Structural Funds Plan, as a plan to address the Regions needs as identified by the European Commission.
5. These programmes are co-funded by the exchequer.
6. It is interesting to note that throughout the 1980s, area-based development was pursued in NI as a means of tackling rural poverty. This ethos of using community development as a means to address rural poverty was carried over into the early stages of the rural development structures that developed in the 1990s.
7. It is estimated that 1-2% of the CAP budget goes to area-based rural development: RDD Division, DARD, personal communication, January 2001.
8. See Shortall (forthcoming); and Shortall and Kelly (2001). See Donaghy and Kelly (2001) for a discussion of some of the shortcomings of the legislation and its implementation.

9. If they are paid, then they are returned in the appropriate category in the LFS. There is no information on whether or not spouses are paid. While some are paid a wage for tax purposes, we are told it is assumed that most are not paid a wage (Economics and Statistics Division, DARD, personal communication, January 2001). Individual wages within family businesses raise complex questions that feminist literature cannot easily address.
10. LEADER+ (2000-2006) is the third programme in line within the European Union initiative LEADER (Liaison entre actions de développement de l'économie rurale) for rural development that started in 1991. Within the framework of LEADER new approaches to rural development can be invented and tested, with the aim that innovative approaches would be adopted by mainstream national programmes.

**REFERENCE**

- J. Bryden, R. Watson, C. Storey, and J. Van Alphen (1996) *Community Involvement and Rural Policy*. Edinburgh: The Scottish Office
- DARD (2000) *The Rural Development Programme – An Equality Review: Women*. Unpublished document
- Davis, J. and S. Shortall (1999) *Towards a brave liberal world? Living with European policies*. pp.182-216. In: Davis, J. (ed.) *Rural Change in Ireland*. Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies
- Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (1999) *Gaps in Stats Gender and official statistics in Northern Ireland*, Belfast.
- European Commission (2000) *Equal Opportunities for women and men in the European Union. Annual Report 1999*, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities
- First Report of the Fourth Joint Committee on Women's Rights (1994) *Women and Rural Development*, Dublin
- R. Gasson (1992) *Farmers' wives: their contribution to the farm business*. *Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 43, pp. 74-87
- Kelly, R. and T. Donaghy (2001) *Doing their duty: Implementing statutory duty under section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998: Lessons from the Department of agriculture and rural development*, Northern Ireland. Paper presented at the Political Studies Association of Ireland Annual Conference, Galway, 2 - 4 November 2001
- J. McPherson and L. Smith-Lovin (1986) *Sex segregation in voluntary organizations*. *American Sociological Review*, 51, pp. 61-79
- Moss, J.E., C.J. Jack, M. Wallace, and S.A. McErlean (2000) *Securing the future of small family farms: the off-farm solution*. Paper presented at the European Rural Policy at the Crossroads, The Arkleton Research Centre, University of Aberdeen 29 June - 1 July 2000
- O'Hara, Patricia (1998) *Partners in production? Women, farm and family in Ireland*. New York & Oxford: Berghahn Books
- Patricia O'Hara (1998) *Challenges facing rural women in the next decade and their participation in the decision-making process*. Paper presented at the FAO's Ninth Session of the Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development, Yerevan, Armenia
- Popielarz, P. (1999) *Voluntary association: A multilevel analysis of gender segregation in voluntary organizations*. *Gender and Society*, 13 (2), pp. 234-250
- Rees, T. (1999) *Mainstreaming equality in the European Union*. London: Routledge
- Reimer B. (1986) *Women as farm labour*. *Rural Sociology*, 51 (2) pp.143-155
- Rosilli, M. (2000) *Introduction*. pp. 1-23. In: M. Rosilli, (ed.) *Gender policies in the European Union*. London: Routledge.
- Rural and urban based women's organisations (1999) *Submission to the DFP on future priorities for European Structural Funds*.
- Shortall, S. (1994) *The Irish rural development paradigm - an exploratory analysis*. *The Economic and Social Review*, 25 (3), pp.233-261
- Shortall, S. (1996) *What are the new approaches to rural development*. *Economic and Social Review*, 27 (3), pp. 286-305
- Shortall, S. (1996) *Training to be farmers or wives? Agricultural training for women in Northern Ireland*. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 36 (3), pp. 269-286
- Shortall, S. (1999) *Gender and Power - Women and Farming*. London, Macmillan Press.
- Shortall, S. and M. Shucksmith (2001) *Rural development in practice: issues arising in Scotland and Northern Ireland*, *Community Development Journal*, 36 (2), pp. 122-134
- Structural Funds Plan 2000-2006 Northern Ireland – a region achieving transition. Belfast: Northern Ireland Office
- S. Shortall, and R. Kelly (2001) *Gender proofing CAP reforms*. Rural Community Network: Cookstown.
- S. Shortall, (forthcoming) *European policy and gender relations: A case study of Northern Ireland*
- S. Shortall, (forthcoming b) *Politics, gender and the farmyard: Political restructuring in Northern Ireland*.
- R. Kelly, and S. Shortall, (2002) *'Farmers' wives': Women who are off-farm breadwinners & the implications for on-farm gender relations*. *Journal of Sociology*, 38 (4)
- Women's Resource and Development Agency and the Rural Women's Networks (2001) *Strategic Plan*