

Survey reveals opinions of today's farm wife

CHICAGO, Ill. - Farm women are sharing more and more in farm operation and management, but the man is still the boss on today's farm. And farm women tend to oppose the women's liberation movement.

These and other conclusions are based on a random sampling of 1000 U.S. farm wives and farmers who responded to a recent survey conducted by International Harvester's Farm Forum Magazine on the role of farm women today.

In response to the question, "Overall, do you feel that the amount of involvement of the farm wife in the actual operation and management of the farm has increased or decreased from what it was a generation ago," the answers were as follows: Increased - 82 per cent; Remained about the same - 10 per cent; Decreased - 8 per cent.

Asked if they believe it is necessary for the farm wife to take an active role in the business side of the farm operation to make it a success, two-thirds answered "definitely yes," and 30 per cent felt it was not necessary but it was helpful. Only 2 per cent said "probably not."

Yet, despite the more active role of women in farm operation and management,

the man of the house generally has the last word. Respondents were asked, "In your own household, who is responsible for the major decisions on management practices and purchases directly related to farm or ranch operation?" The answers were as follows: Both the man and the woman share, but the man is ultimately responsible - 49 per cent; The man of the house - 31 per cent; Both the man and the woman share equally - 18 per cent; The woman of the house 1 per cent.

Most farm wives spend much of the time managing the home and family. When asked to describe the chief responsibilities of the farm wife in their own household, the responses were as follows: Her responsibilities are about equally divided between home-family and farm management operation - 50 per cent; Most or all of her responsibilities are concerned with managing the home and family - 44 per cent; Most or all of her responsibilities are concerned with management and-or operation of the farm - 4 per cent.

The respondents were divided on the question of women's liberation, with more opposing than supporting it. When asked how they felt about the women's

liberation movement, only 7 per cent strongly favor it, and 23 per cent are somewhat in favor of it. More than a fifth (23 per cent) are strongly opposed to the movement, 18 per cent are mildly opposed, and 28 per cent are neither for nor against it.

A major role being played by many farm women today is that of working on behalf of agricultural industry in a variety of ways. Following are responses to the question, "How actively involved should farm women become in telling agriculture's story to non-farmers, and working for legislation to benefit farmers": Definitely should be actively involved - 54 per cent. No more or less active than the man in the household - 31 per cent. The man should have primary responsibility - 7 per cent. More active than the man in a household - 6 per cent. Woman should not be involved in those activities - 1 per cent.

Is there a trend for farm women to become more actively involved in community activities and organizations? The great majority (71 per cent) said yes, while 28 per cent said no.

TRY A CLASSIFIED

Grange seeks change of unemployment compensation

HARRISBURG, Pa. - The Pennsylvania State Grange has requested state officials to "look into" high costs of unemployment compensation insurance for farmers and some small business people.

The problem was presented to the State Insurance Commissioner William J. Sheppard by the Grange and concerned groups on February 18. State Agriculture Secretary Kent D. Shelhamer and members of the House Agriculture Committee also have been informed of the situation.

Unemployment compensation is especially difficult for the family-type farmer who occasionally hires someone to help harvest crops, or who needs help with other work when adverse weather threatens, J. Luther Snyder, master of the State Grange, explained.

For example, Snyder pointed out, a farmer who pays out \$200 in wages for parttime help, would have to pay a minimum premium of \$280 for unemployment insurance.

In 1974, legislation was

enacted requiring unemployment coverage mandatory in agriculture if payroll exceeded \$150 annually or 20 working days.

At first, the rate was two per cent of a farmer's payroll, or \$2 for each \$100 paid in wages. This rate was gradually increased until last year when it reached 5.8 per cent of the payroll, or \$5.80 for each \$100 paid in wages. On February 1, another increase became effective, raising the rate to 6.3 per cent, or \$6.30 for each \$100 of payroll.

The minimum annual premium of \$280 ac-

tually provides for coverage, at the present 6.3 per cent rate, on more than \$4000 in wages. Not many small farmers who need only occasional help pay that amount of wages in a year, Snyder pointed out.

It was his understanding, he added, that if a farm is not incorporated, the farmer himself and members of his family are not covered by unemployment compensation insurance.

Many small businesses that require only parttime help are affected in the same way, according to Snyder.

Drought plan proposed

MECHANICSBURG, Pa. - The Susquehanna River Basin Commission to emphasize development of water conservation policies in order to be prepared for drought periods such as the western United States is currently experiencing. The SRBC, which has regulatory authority to manage basin water supplies during a

drought emergency, believes that the availability and implementation of such a policy can help residents and industries of the basin cope with drought conditions, if they occur, and reduce wasteful uses of water. The Commission expects to have a water conservation policy ready for public review and comment later this year.

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