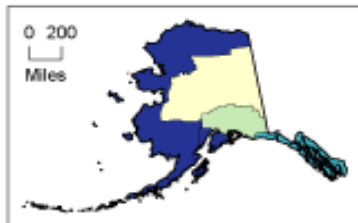




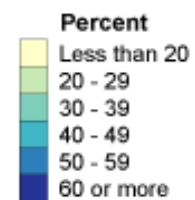
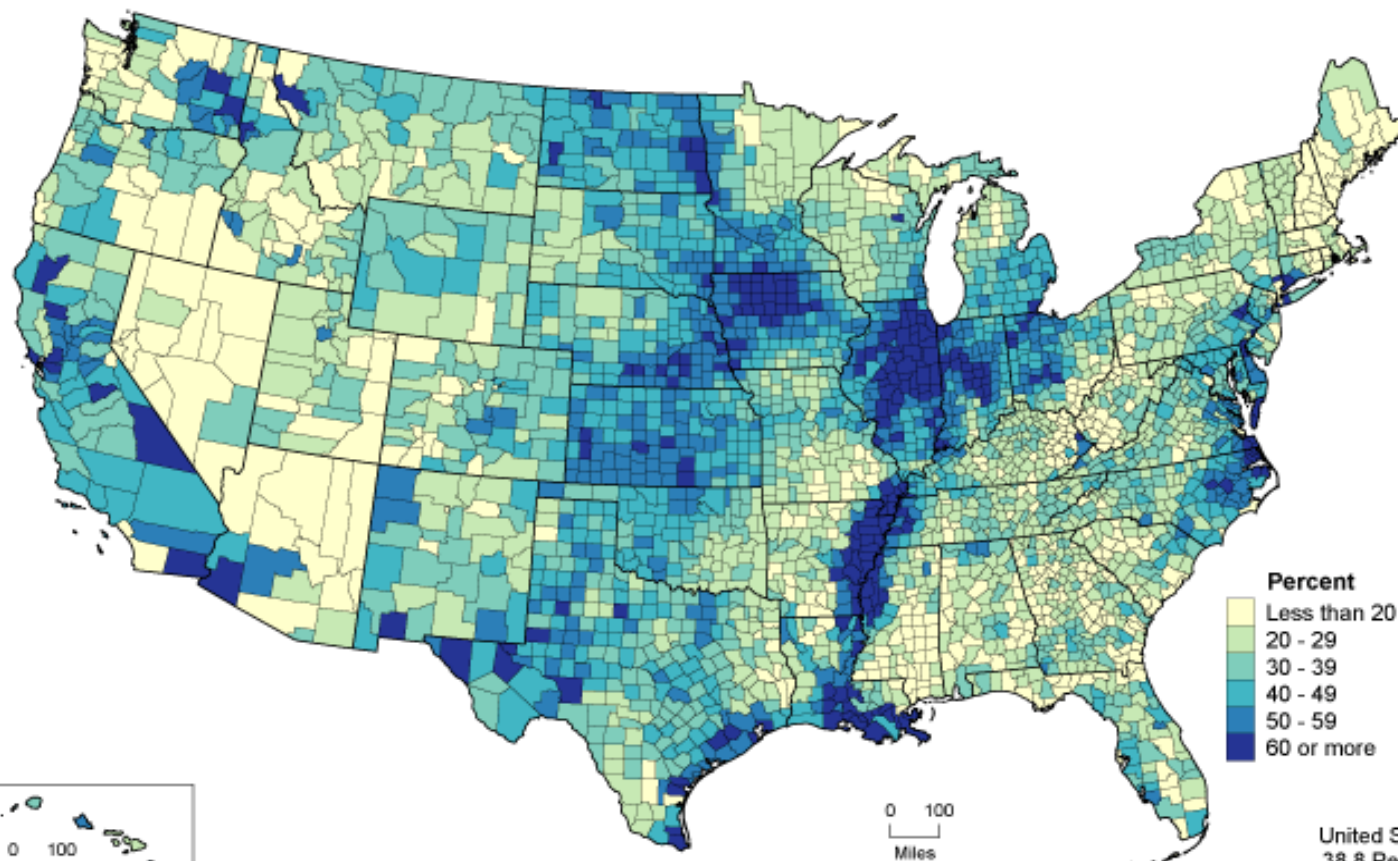
Women Non-Operating Landowners

ANN SORENSEN: LEXINGTON, KY: OCTOBER 21, 2014



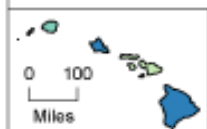


Percent of Land in Farms Rented or Leased: 2012



United States
38.8 Percent

2012 Census of Agriculture



12-M116
U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service

Research on Women Who Own Farmland

- Led by AFT and Utah State University
 - Advisory group
 - Developed and testing survey questionnaire
 - Raising funds to complete survey (led by USU, AFT, ISU and WFAN)
- Support includes Rachel's Network, USDA ERS and Mosaic Company Foundation

What we know....

- NOLs own 42% of US ag land base
- Most of the information on NOLs from Iowa:
 - Land under owner operator status dropped from 55% in 1982 to 40% in 2012
 - Owners are aging, females > important
 - WNOLs own 47% of farmland & lease 52% of all acres.
- No comparable WNOLs info. in other states

Landlord-Tenant Relationship

- With so much farmland rented, landlord-tenant relationship plays significant role
- Social, economic & environmental implications
 - Uneven power relations
 - Rental rates may not reflect value of land asset
 - Reduced land stewardship.

Differing Goals for Landowners?

- Iowa non-operating landowners' goals for their farmland:
 - **Women** rank conservation, stewardship and legacy equally high with profit and long term investment
 - **Men** consistently rank profit generation and long term income higher

Women Non-Operating Landowners

- Face gendered barriers to managing their land for long-term sustainability.
- Inequitable power relations with male tenants
- Self-censor, reluctant to discuss sustainable ag practices (may “*scare away good tenants*”)
- May feel excluded and alienated from the farm decision-making.

Regional Differences?

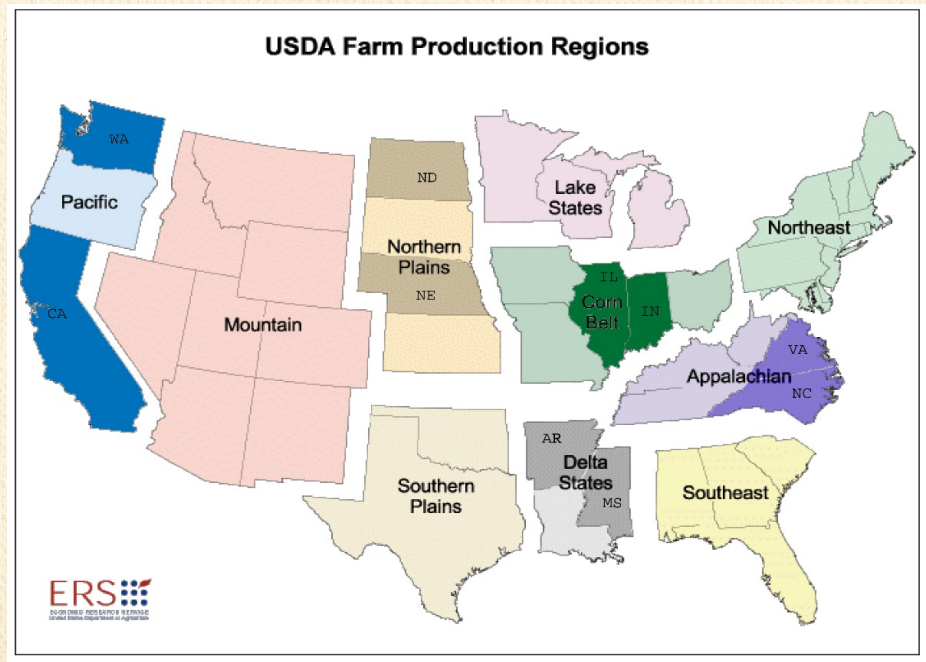
- Obstacles between tenants and WNOLs may differ depending on region and type of production.
- Social origins of farm production systems vary region to region.
 - Northern Plains and Midwest historically = “family farming”
 - California, Florida = “corporate farming”
 - South = “share cropping”

Research Questions

- How does gender & non-operator land ownership factor into conservation decision-making & behavior on farmland?
- To what extent do gender & non-operator landownership factors vary regionally?
- How does that affect conservation implementation on leased land?

Research Methods

- Convene WNOLs in the USDA Production Regions.



- Meet for 3-4 hr to pilot test survey and discuss issues faced as landowners.

Hungry for Information yet invisible...

- Executive Director of CA Assoc. of Resource Conservation Districts
- North Bay Food Systems Advisor
- Farm Advisor for UC Napa
- American Farmland Trust
- CA Women for Ag
- Natural Resource Conservation Service
- VP, Director of the Ag Exp. Stn, Director of Cooperative Extension
- Strategic Initiative Leader, Sustainable Food Systems, Food and Society Fellow
- Assoc. Cooperative Extension Specialist
- Community Alliance with Family Farmers
- CA Farm Link
- Farms Reach
- Rangeland Conservation Services

Demographics

- Appalachia (VA), Corn Belt (IN), Northern Plains (ND), Lake States (MN/WI) and Southern Plains (TX)
- Household income \$25K to \$175K
- Lake States 106 acres to Northern Plains 912 acres to Southern Plains 1,054 acres
- Most purchased land but in Southern Plains, most inherited land (largely rangeland)
- Half owned land with others (except Appalachia, Southern Plains)
- Appalachia and Lake States identified as farmers

Decision Making

- Most said they were primary decision-maker
- Tenants were responsible for:
 - Crop inputs (lower in Appalachia)
 - Tillage and harvesting
 - Crop varieties (lower in Appalachia)
 - Conservation practices (low in all regions)
 - Livestock decisions (for half of the women)
 - In Southern Plains, most worked with tenants to repair fences

Conservation Decision-Making

- Most important considerations:
 - Soil quality, water quality, future availability of land for ag, biodiversity and need for income
- Slightly less important:
 - Wildlife habitat, endangered spp., surrounding community and needs of the tenant (except Southern Plains where neighbors and needs of tenant were most important, soil and water quality least important – although most had hilly land, half were near water bodies)

Enrollment in Conservation Programs

- More enrolled in CRP than in other programs
- Only a few used cost-share or planning assistance (in Southern Plains, half had used planning assistance)
- A few also had conservation easements
- Many concerned that discussing conservation would upset tenant or neighbors

Leases

- Majority used cash rent with fixed payments
- Very few had crop share or combination
- Most had written leases but a few just had verbal leases
- Most had annual leases
- A few had longer duration leases

Interest in Information

- Most very interested in:
 - Access to educational materials
 - Working with government agencies
 - Belonging to network of women
 - Participating in free learning circles

Preliminary Conclusions

- Already detecting regional differences
- In most regions, these women are “invisible”
- WNOLs want more information, more networking with other WNOLs, access to more informal participatory discussions
- Empowering these women should help us get more conservation on the ground



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American Farmland Trust

www.farmland.org