



Breaking the 'Grass' Ceiling: Barriers for Women in the Agriculture Sector

AERA Committee -Thursday 3 February 2022

What do you think are the top 3 challenges facing women in the local agriculture sector?

Challenges family commitments and children then working part time.

off farm challenges such as selling or buying women cane women discriminated against with cost - it is an attitude problem

lots of young girls at Greenmount but not following through. Should Greenmount have equality training

A challenge is dealing with men and the attitude around inheritance- even if you speak up you still face this issue

7 challenges listed are interlinked

we are food producers - it should not come down to who puts the sheep into the ring and gets a lower price - the produce is the same if a man had reared those lambs

7 challenges are connected to having support to farm - belief in the woman herself and support from her family, community/society, and organisations

I feel one major challenge that has been missed is lack of maternity support, unlike any other industry those in agriculture are at risk for the 9months (cows kicking, sheep lambing). Most self employed take a few weeks off after dangerous in ag

How can these challenges be addressed?

There is an need for equality training. Misogyny is in the farming sector

The speed of change needs to be increased

Point is to identify the problem - that's the start of solving it

Do we go back to schools? Yes we should. Equality training happens in every walk of life but how do you monitor it in the farming sector? We should go back to the discussion on Greenmount providing equality training.

Female vets being told they don't have the strength to deliver calf - it is the patronising attitude of men - could you have meeting at markets to discuss what is appropriate?

Education - gender neutral language. Resources for schools show a male farmer and show men and their sons, make it more normal this is such as easy thing to do

If farming is your primary income there should be financial support during the maternity period for extra help etc

Scotland - unbias training it is about businesses in the agriculture sector encouraging and supporting women

met the press and remind them that women and men work on farms and they should consider in the future the photos they use e.g. farming life etc.

How can greater supporter for women help the agricultural sector meet its strategic challenges?

The wider economy is in need of recovery including agriculture and the entire workforce needs to be skilled to help the economy

A women having her place within the farm will be so important.

We need to support women in that the strategy coming forward maybe very different and we need the farming sector who can be innovate

We don't know what innovation we have to come up with to be able to see what is needed

In research women it has demonstrated that women are multifunctional

Research has shown that women are more likely to engage in multifunctional farming which can help farm viability and sustainability

At college women women seem to be more innovative and seem to face challenges better than some young men

A lot of girls had adopted what they have learned, men particularly mould into what has been there before. I have changed a lot on the farm and my dad has been accepting

Representation matters at all levels

How can greater supporter for women help the agricultural sector meet its strategic challenges?

Succession planning is an issue within this sector. Having women involved in so important.

Recovery following PandemicWith funding the gap is rural childcare could be filled.



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What do you think are the top 3 challenges facing women in the local agriculture sector?

Lack of prejudice in business world – banks etc. Change of attitude and culture/ generational change. Unconscious bias.

Bias

Women only training

Lack of role models

More role models and leadership

Women often overlooked

lack of recognition for women - not being taking seriously

Confidence building

Not encouraged to enter farming

What do you think are the top 3 challenges facing women in the local agriculture sector?

Keep an eye on young people with experience and see women take the role needs some mentoring for young women

Greenmount mostly boys women in minority

Childcare responsibilities/ culture falls to women

Access to finance

No maternity no helping hand

Childcare - costs of childminding and access to these in evenings and weekends

Bias from supporting services like banks and lenders

No employment support for a farmer i.e maternity pay

Barriers ; culture, caring, cash, confidence and candidacy....

What do you think are the top 3 challenges facing women in the local agriculture sector?

Uncertainty in agri at present....

How can these challenges be addressed?

Role models - women leaders and more women speaking up

Having role models Having mentorship for young women. Cafre knowledge transfer.

Follow leaders/role models - social impact!!

Active positive discrimination

Recognition shining in their own communities

Learn from inspiring success stories

Showcase examples of visible women- 7 days a week leaders.

Farming recognised as a valued occupation from Secondary School stage upwards -

Highlight those young women in stories and books share their vision and possibilities

How can these challenges be addressed?

See a better future - vision that things are possible

Difficult world to be taken seriously in

BDG group advisors to encourage more female farmers or farm family members to join meetings or have dedicated farm family members night to encourage - more innovative

Challenge agri organisations to promote equality and inclusion (holistically)

Challenge organisations and manufacturers to promote more diversity/equality

Get on presidential teams!

Encourage entrants to the sector

Respecting both sexes!!

"What are you doing here?" Male dominated environment. Different space to discuss different wider topics

How can these challenges be addressed?

Changing mindset from early age!

Moving forward positively!

Learning consciousness/ teach younger ones a Farmer can be male or female

Multi stakeholder advisory board!

Independent review of women in agriculture

Independent review

Championing the role of equality. Scrutiny of equality in the sector

Political leadership to challenge constructively in terms of greater equality

Listen to the passion that is in the agricultural industry

How can greater supporter for women help the agricultural sector meet its strategic challenges?

Better talent

Exclusion causing difficulty

Exclusion of talent

If we don't retain and attract people to the agri- industry and rural communities, labour will be lost to other industry

Extra level of barrier in rural communities

Apprenticeships and funding available to target women to come into industry

Employment educational programmes

Internships on farms

Internships - translate this over to farming sector

How can greater supporter for women help the agricultural sector meet its strategic challenges?

Attract and retain talent in the industry

Need to make industry attractive for women

Women are more adaptable - encourage transferable skills.
Women more likely than men to enable change

Use the talent in the industry!

Women are leaders in farming diversification

Women are creative. Encouraging innovative thinking.
Thinking about the assets at our disposal.

The department is willing to give funding grants for equipment etc why not put funding in to a women's programme investing in bringing women into agriculture - training programmes practical skills, diversification

I know that women farmers are really active in the nature friendly farming network. They are showing leadership in this area. Create internships. Partnership with role model farmers.

Invest in women to come into programmes

How can greater supporter for women help the agricultural sector meet its strategic challenges?

Maternity support for women

Maternity cover

Affirmative action!!!

Need early maternity support and caring responsibility

Address affirmative action to the barriers of cash, culture, cash confidence and candidacy



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What do you think are the top 3 challenges facing women in the local agriculture sector?

Education and training for upskilling

Male dominated leadership
Unconscious Bias
Opportunity for farming

Women specific funding
Affordable training
Succession with NI's old fashioned views!

Childcare/ Maternity Leave
Physical challenges - eg calving alone
Essentially if they have confidence in themselves they have few barriers except for an older brother

Change of attitudes ie unconscious bias
Education and training funding
Childcare or caring for family members

Leading on regenerative farming, need training
Recognise role of women who marry in -leaders
Monitor agriculture occupation

Availing of grants.
Succession planning which involves three generations.
Care of elderly.

Stigma around taking your child out on the farm with you

Practical issues around health and safety - eg women working around sheep when pregnant

What do you think are the top 3 challenges facing women in the local agriculture sector?

Long hours when pregnant - day care centres do not work farm hours

Accessibility and public transport make child care an issue.

When a woman says she is taking on a family farm the response is "Have you no brothers?!"

Once women are in place and seen to be on the farm they can be better treated than men, even seen to get better prices at market...

74% in DEFRA research women said they had a key role in decision making and ideas. The women were a "fresh pair of eyes".

Women are leading on regenerative farming. Less held back by inherited methods. Could bring a new business approach.

Women are early adopters environmentally

The eldest may not be the best farmer or the one who wants it. Succession planning is important, including a female aspect.

Lessons to be learned around leadership roles and unconscious bias

What do you think are the top 3 challenges facing women in the local agriculture sector?

Women who marry into a farm often bring a wide range of transferable skills

Women often have the business head while the man is dealing with the practical husbandry elements

Education and Upskilling
Childcare/Maternity Leave/Physical issues
Stigma
Lack of support to look after child - criticism about child's safety.
Issue about women inheriting farm not a brother.
Male dominated
Women Specific Funding

Women can have a lack of confidence against the bias in the farming world, especially in term of gaining finance. Women have to earn the respect by gaining confidence in themselves

Vet careers also still male dominated - maybe lessons to be learned
Maybe still unconscious bias
Regenerative farming in Europe - women leading in this

Getting the confidence to take the first step may mean starting at school or college level. Embed from childhood to build up expertise and confidence

It is women's responsibility to stand up and build their confidence - stand up and say that they want to farm

Poor communication around inheritance - where women have not expressed their wishes before the decisions are made and announced - can destroy families

Insufficient monitoring in farming on female participation as there is in industry, nor on training or many other elements

What do you think are the top 3 challenges facing women in the local agriculture sector?

Gender neutral phrases needed to promote training to women.

Income can be a challenge - preventing farming from being chosen as a career

How can these challenges be addressed?

Women are stepping up more - they are there on merit and there should be a buy in by industry to remove unconscious bias

Business and enterprise courses could be designed to specifically target farming women - eg mentoring programmes

engage women's advocacy groups in policy reform. Improve participation of women in full range of association leadership

Include men in defining the 'problem' and the solution

Leadership/ confidence training

Cultural change/ training on digital platform and funded

Women need to recognise their own skills - they need to see themselves as entrepreneurs and innovators - more training this way

Needs a change around language used - should be gender neutral

Training fund
Education in Primary schools
Fair & innovative succession planning.

How can these challenges be addressed?

Proper benchmarking and monitoring of womens role in agriculture

In Scotland there was a funded digital platform for training

Realising farming is not just a farmer, skills of all the family
NB Access to training different financial needs (less finance)

Advisory board made up of stakeholders - women in business, ufu, Daera, department of economy, banks, Women farmers etc

Rigorous academic review and study of the unique role of women in NÍ

Everything should be equality and diversity proofed

Confidence building at school and agri college financial support for those on maternity leave
Talk Talk Talk succession - and handing over responsibilities when everyone is living
Increased profitability on farm would allow for additional labour

Attitude changes stakeholder engagement and training
Education in agriculture in schools/ colleges
Training funds for up skilling
Champion equality diversity and inclusion

CAFRE should have a minimum on courses

How can these challenges be addressed?

Monitoring and evaluation of the landscape will help to build equality

Needs to be monitored as to how progressing so change can be made for a better gender balance.

Women must be involved in the mainstream

Pushing for equality can make the men defensive. They may not be sexist, just entrenched in behaviour

Good idea to get male opinion? Maybe old fashioned views from males on equality and role of women in Agriculture.

The situation is not just about women - it is about equality, but women are a good start

Would be good to have a body made up of a wider range of organisations, such as Departments, Women in Business, etc

Addressing Equality - Involve DAERA, Women in Business - how can it be incorporated across the board to make it Northern Ireland specific.

Needs an innovative look at inheritance planning, to bridge the generation gap and to begin early with children

How can these challenges be addressed?

How "farmer" is defined -needs to be considered - more entrepreneurial, in addition to the practical and animal husbandry

Training fundEducation in Primary schools which promotes the varied roles in agricultureSuccession planning for that spans generations & future proofs

Promote farming more as a career in schools

woman role models

women in the leadership roles of Ag associations

How can greater supporter for women help the agricultural sector meet its strategic challenges?

Women are early adopters - climate change and regenerative agriculture

Can't just expect things to change - women have to put themselves out there to develop this and work for change - reap and sew

50% of students in CAFRE were female, but a fraction were planning to return to the farm. One issue is the lack of income

Farming families are becoming increasingly isolated - the traditional role of the 'farmer's wife' has disappeared - particularly if it was viable for partnerships on farm we would see many more farm businesses come alive again

Women are more innovative and keen to diversify to increase profit which in turn assists economic growth and its contribution towards the economy

Need strong female role models - improved marketing, online participation. Women in NI don't always want the stresses of standing up

Shortage of farmers and workers - women are an untapped workforce

If support was available for women to allow them to have maternity leave / time off this would be very well received

Women working off the farm - might prefer to be on farm, but needed to work off the farm so her income supported the farm - Need funding for upskilling?

How can greater supporter for women help the agricultural sector meet its strategic challenges?

Economic growth post COVID
Access to grants especially for small farms can benefit the environment & community.
Upskilling funding especially in the area of childcare.

Hard to encourage young women on board

Recognition of skills and their transferability to on farm role