

MEETING THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF FARM WOMEN:  
A CASE STUDY OF ANNIE'S PROJECT

Karisha Devlin

Dr. Jeni Hart, Dissertation Supervisor

ABSTRACT

Women farm operators continue to be underserved by traditional models of agricultural education and training. In order to effectively address the needs of farm women, it is necessary to evaluate and study existing agricultural educational programs for women. This qualitative intrinsic case study evaluated the effectiveness of Annie's Project in meeting the educational needs of farm women. Interviews were conducted with 18 past Annie's Project participants in Missouri, Iowa, and Illinois to study the influence of Annie's Project on their lives.

The findings of this case study show that Annie's Project helped participants find their voice and agency on the farm, as well as strengthen farm relationships. This led participants to feel empowered to become better business partners and owners, seek additional education, increase their satisfaction with their farm role and/or lifestyle, and contribute to their rural communities. This study supports the current research that women respond to women only programs, a network of other women is important, and education empowers women.

Additionally, this study substantiates the need for assisting women in all stages of their farming identities so they can be an equitable partner or the farmer in their farming operation. As we move forward, the need for educational programs for farm women will continue to be in high demand. Annie's Project, coupled with the implications from this study, can serve as a guide for development of future programming for farm women.