



Women in Farming and the Agriculture Sector



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Overview

- Overview of the research
- Some key findings
 - Training
 - Diversification
 - Leadership
 - Farm Safety
- Recommendations
- Women in Agriculture Task Force



Copy of banner produced for RHS 2016 featuring photo of Sybil MacPherson, Dalmally, 2015 from the series *Drawn to the Land* by Sophie Gerrard

The Women in Farming and the Agriculture Sector Research

- Commissioned by Scottish Government to “investigate the role of women in farming and the agriculture sector in Scotland”
- First research of its kind in Scotland
- Research approach
 - Literature review
 - 9 focus groups
 - 30 interviews
 - On-line survey of women living and working farms (1118 responses)
 - On-line survey of students and alumni (148 responses)

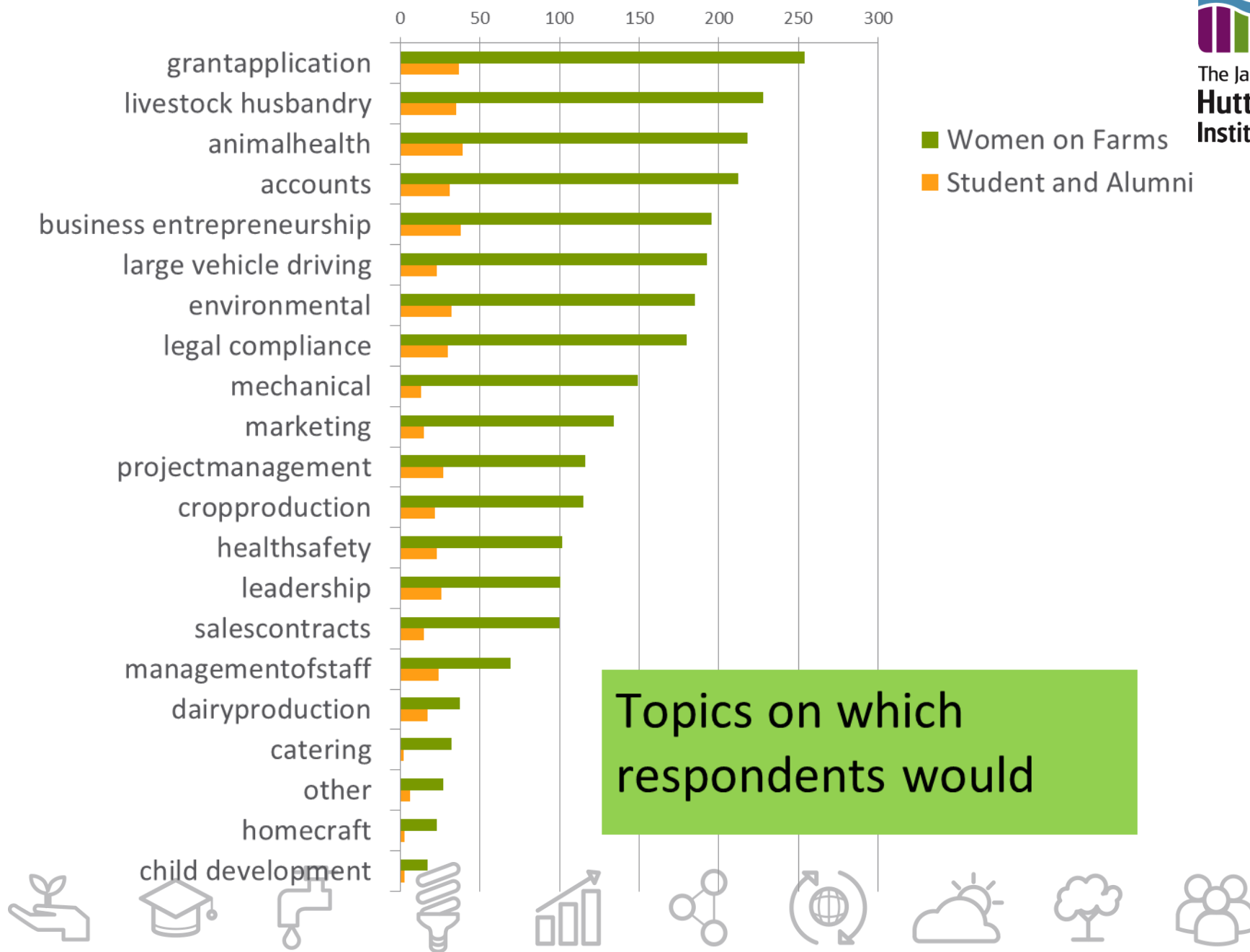


Focus group participants, Shapinsay,
September 2016





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Training issues: %Agree

- 33%: “Current educational opportunities available address the topics of greatest interest to me.”
- 45%: “I can access all the knowledge I need to develop the farm.”
- 73%: “Women could be more active in farming diversification if they had the opportunity to further develop relevant skills.”
- 48%: “Current agricultural education opportunities are not well suited to the needs of parents.”
- 20%: “I would be uncomfortable at an agricultural training course because they are mostly attended by men”.



Farm Diversification

- Wide range of topics and scale of diversification
- Diversification can be oriented towards meeting household income and flexible employment objectives, rather than a 'business' strategy
- Women are more likely to be involved in 'public-facing' diversification strategies
- 29% of survey participants expressed an interest in developing farm diversification activities in the next five years (including 38% of crofting respondents).
- 75%: "Working off-farm is rewarding to women in terms of status and individual identity"
- 79%: "Developing on-farm diversified enterprises such as agri-tourism gives women the opportunity to utilise their skills and pursue a range of career ambitions".
- 72% also agreed that "If there was more money in farming, fewer women would work off-farm".



Women in leadership – barriers and opportunities

- Most survey respondents would like to see more women involved in leadership of farming organisations
- About 1/3 were personally interested in becoming more involved in leadership themselves
- Lack of time is a major barrier
- The Scottish Association of Young Farmer Clubs (SAYFC) was the most common provider of leadership experience to women in Scottish agriculture.



Panel discussion at RHASS 'Women in Agriculture' event, November 2016



Conscious and Unconscious bias

- Girls socialised into non-farming roles, not identified as succession prospects:

- *“Despite the fact that I had a sister who was probably...would have made a better farmer than me, there was never any question of her having the opportunity rather than me as far as I'm aware”. Men Focus Group # 1*

- Women don't fit the profile of NFUS representatives:

- *“There's no physical barriers but there's an enormous cultural barrier.*
 - *And folk would'nae vote for them. #1” Men focus group #2*



- Gender proofing legislation: naming a single croft holder can negatively impact women in the case of divorce
- Women who inherit farm land are more likely to express interest in farming organisation leadership





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Farm Safety

*“My big accident I nearly had last year was...and it was part of my own stubbornness and not asking for help, I was carting the grain in and out on the combine and we were putting the winter barley into the bins and my partner was on the combine and I was loading the pits which then... Open the hole and this is quite heavy and its quite an awkward...you're hanging out over a big empty bin and its very awkward because it breaks in half as well if you don't hold it properly and I got it off and I was shifting backwards and it came in half and I...and it went into the bin and I - **Luckily I didn't go into the bin but I gave myself a heck of a fright...but that was a learning curve. I would never do that again.**”*

Women in agricultural industry focus group



Recommendations

- The cultural practice of passing on large farms intact to one son needs to be challenged.
- A 30% quota system for farming organisation boards and committees
- Establishment of a 'talent bank' of suitably qualified women for farming positions
- Identifying women mentors to support male and female apprentices
- Practical, hands-on training programmes need to be developed and made accessible to women through flexible scheduling, childcare availability and on-line components.
- Women should be supported to pursue a range of farm diversification opportunities
- More land should be made available for new entrants
- Financial incentives for farmers to purchase equipment appropriate for women and to encourage the use of childcare facilities, should be developed.



Women in Agriculture Task Force

- Co-chairs: Cabinet Secretary Fergus Ewing and Joyce Campbell
- Members:
 - Nina Clancy (RSABI)
 - Sandy Hay (Bank of Scotland)
 - Patrick Krause (Scottish Crofting Federation)
 - Sarah Jane Laing (Scottish Land and Estates)
 - Andrew Marchant (QMS Monitor Farm)
 - Andrew McCornick (NFUS)
 - Anne Rae MacDonald (SAOS)
 - Annie McKee (James Hutton Institute)
 - Wayne Powell (SRUC)
 - Sally Shortall (Newcastle University)
 - Clare Sturla (SAYFC)
 - Lee-Ann Sutherland (James Hutton Institute)





Thank you

The researchers would like to thank all the participants and advisors to this study, for sharing their time and experience.

Full report available online: [Women in Agriculture Report](#)



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