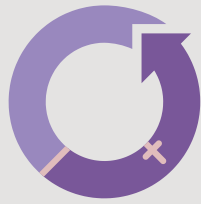


WOMEN FOR THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE

*Promoting Gender Inclusion in Agriculture and
the Food Value chain sectors*





WOMEN FOR THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE

Preface



Women are key contributors to the improvement of various issues in the areas of farming, agriculture, foresters and the environment. Yet their contribution and relevance of it is often overlooked.

The good news is that projects in these areas have increased female participation in recent years.

Recent data from Eurostat 2016 suggests that, on average, 29% of farms across the EU are managed by women. However, this information can vary significantly between countries.

It is evident that agriculture is still a sector where women's representation lags, yet it's expected that the green transition will bring more women into the sector. To answer this unbalance, an increasing number of platforms are dedicated to promoting collaboration networks (e.g. Women in Food and Agriculture, USDA Women Network) or through awards (e.g. Empowering Women in Agrifood (EWA)).

The Campaign's Goal

ELO would like to make a small contribution to support and amplify the voice of women in agriculture. The campaign's main aim is to gather examples of leading women in the areas of sustainable agriculture and local initiatives to build resilient food systems. Also, to encourage women to participate more in initiatives such as the ForumforAg Podcasts, side events and workshops and close the gender gap.

As a co-founder of the Forum for the Future of Agriculture, we are proud to launch the Women for the Future of Agriculture initiative.

ELO will publish a daily portrait of a woman in the agricultural sector working as a farmer, campaigner, politician or researcher during March. The articles were created based on a brief questionnaire they answered and other relevant links or documents, which will be shared via the ELO website and Social Media channels (LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook).

Join us in celebrating a month where every day is a woman's day!

WOMEN FOR THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE

I entered the family business by chance. Right after finishing my degree in Econometrics and Statistics, I came home to study for the GMAT in the middle of the harvest.

Our farm manager quit unexpectedly, and I started with the idea that this was a temporary fill-in job until we found the right person. At some point I realized that I had become that person.

Today, my job covers all aspects of management- from daily oversight, to decisions pertaining to crop rotation and crop variety, to investment in machinery and land. In this, I would not identify myself different from most farmers that I know, we all wear many hats at the same time and juggle with the micro and macro aspects whilst making decisions for the business simultaneously.

Challenges of being a farmer

The biggest challenge overall is climate change and its immediate and long-term effects on our business. My biggest personal challenge was the resistance to any change and new ideas on how to manage the farm from my team and peers. I had a lot of self-doubt and moments where I second guessed myself in my path to reform the way we farm. A large misconception about women in agriculture is this stereotype that a "farmer" is a middle-aged man within overalls.

"In reality anyone can be a farmer"

In reality, anyone can be a farmer. Until not so long ago when I was younger, I struggled to be taken seriously and accepted by my peers, who I admit are mostly men. I am happy to say that this has started to change.

Although it is still very much the case that, for many people maybe if you produce flowers, essential oils and grape wines, it is ok to be a lady.

However, for the more "serious" farming, you need to be a man. I try to take this in stride with some sense of humour. I would encourage women to get into farming, regardless of the prejudices, at the end of the day, your work speaks for itself and in the long run, people will see and judge by your ability and results.

Women united in agriculture

Once I went on a fun family trip to Cappadocia. On the same small plane, there was a lady who used to be Vice-Minister of Agriculture in Bulgaria, and who is now a very successful agri-entrepreneur.



Galina Peycheva-Miteva
Farmer, Land Manager &
Landowner in Bulgaria since 2007

Next to her there was a lady who owns and runs a bio-certification agency and lab in Bulgaria, and then there was me, as a female farmer. There was a great sense of goodwill and camaraderie among us. I am happy and proud when I think of that moment: there are all these amazing women doing wonderful things in agriculture.

WOMEN FOR THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE

I studied law, political sciences and public management. As a young French civil servant, I joined the European Commission in 1989 and the cabinet of Jacques Delors in 1991 where I was in charge of environment. After 22 years in the Commission, I left and a few years later took the lead of the European office of WWF. After the Brexit vote, I pleaded for a different Europe for people, planet, and prosperity, very much in line with the “new model of development” that Jacques Delors defended as President of the European Commission. He signed my petition as well as Pascal Lamy who asked me to create and lead the Brussels office of the Jacques Delors Institute. Since then, this office has become the third Jacques Delors think tank under the name Europe Jacques Delors (EJD).

Europe Jacques Delors (EJD)

EJD, that I lead, is a member of the Jacques Delors family of think tanks inspired by the vision and legacy of Jacques Delors. Its creation in 2020 comes after the Jacques Delors Institute in Paris (1996) and the Jacques Delors Centre in Berlin (2014). The three think tanks contribute to the debate and elaborate proposals to advance European integration. Since its creation, EJD has rapidly built a reputation for excellence, visibility and

"As women, we should not be afraid to enter the world of agriculture"

influence on European and global sustainability issues. Our research and outreach activities aim at raising awareness and providing impact-oriented and forward-looking policy recommendations. So far, we have covered the following areas: Trade and environment; sustainable finance; external dimension of the European Green Deal; “Green Diplomacy”; Ocean protection and Agri-food policy. On this subject we have published a series of policy briefs on Greening agri-food policy in Europe (“GRAPE”).

Challenges in the journey

A first challenge was to succeed in my studies. To get into ENA (the French Ecole Nationale d'Administration) is not an easy task. Only a bit more than 100 students get through this high-level competition every year. When I entered ENA, 75% of the students were male. Second, reconcile my demanding functions with my family life and the raising of my two children. This was particularly difficult when I was a member of the cabinet of Jacques Delors, leaving the office sometimes at midnight...



Geneviève Pons

Director General and Vice President the think-tank, Europe Jacques Delors

Women united in Agriculture

It was an inspiring moment when I met Christiane Lambert for the first time in Paris. She was relaxed and opened her heart. She made me aware of the growing difficulties, but also hostility faced by farmers in a very personal and moving manner.

Women should not be afraid to enter the world of agriculture. We often approach difficulties in a different manner, in a more pragmatic and problem-solving oriented way.

02/03/2023

WOMEN FOR THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE

I am a consultant with a focus on strategy, marketing, PR and sales in the agricultural and food sector. I also host and moderate events, and give talks on related subjects.

I am based in the South of Germany, in Bavaria, where I founded and own the consultancy aHEU. aHEU develops regional marketing strategies based on practical knowledge at all levels of the value chain. I have obtained theoretical knowledge through my academic diplomas in Business Economy and in Sociology. That, in combination with my personal experience from agriculture and food production as an Alpine herdswomen and milk/cheese sommelière, as well as with commercial knowledge on marketing and regional retailing, gives me a valuable 360° insights that benefit my customers.

As a consultant, I accompany projects aimed at developing agricultural and food businesses. Some of them from scratch to establishing the first business, others on particular assignments. For institutions I lead projects like events, awards and strategic processes.

"Do not wait for applause; go on and keep going."

And in my 'vocal business' I give talks, workshops and I moderate - all within the sphere of agriculture and food.

Challenges in your profession

Beside the challenges that come in this quite male-dominated industry, it always gets difficult when a head-to-head competition developed within teams. This paralyses the work, costs much energy and risks successful results.

There is a misconception that women are not interested in owning a farm, leading it or deciding its future. Often, women are not considered or simply overlooked as players in their own right. And because many women on farms do not have their own income or possess other economic means, they are economically dependent.



Heike Zeller
Founder of aHEU

Women United in Agriculture

I realized that women are great networkers: even years after a contract, they remember me and pass me on to somebody who needs my skills. In addition there is a great atmosphere when women meet. For example, a female network: instantly, there is a base for understanding, shared experiences and the common goal to support each other and bring women forward.

My advice to women who want to work within the field of agriculture: follow your joy. Really dive into what you like. Speak directly. Stay true to your conscience. Do not wait for applause, just go and keep going.

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After growing up in the countryside, I went to the big city to study Economics at University and, following graduation, I started a career in the broadcasting industry. Together with my two sisters, I inherited the familial agricultural land and left my job to become a full-time farmer. Today, my husband and I live with our two children on the property where he grew up. Both me and my husband are full-time managing landowners on our own respective lands. Next to my daily work on the estate, I am also part of the Swedish Landowners' Organization.

My responsibilities as a farmer include everything from developing and managing the business of the agricultural and estate properties, such as the planning, preparation and execution of the grain cultivation and the management and development of buildings. Furthermore, I am also active as an ambassador. I try to share my knowledge on the green industry and photosynthesis to those who it may concern. In an urbanizing world, political and strategic decision-making is often too far away from the actual conditions in the rural areas.

Challenges of being a farmer

As a farmer, it is difficult for me to accept that my contribution to the planet and its inhabitants is continuously combined with low security for the company and myself.

"Becoming a farmer is the best decision I have ever made"

For somebody who likes to be in control, it's a challenge to grasp the low return on capital whilst operating in a profession of unavoidable high risks (e.g. the weather) that directly affect the return on our efforts. As farmers, we bind carbon dioxide, produce energy.

Despite that, we must defend our production constantly. Agriculture is also generally classified as being harmful to the environment in Sweden, which complicates things even further.

Farming for the future generations

However, becoming a farmer is the best decision I have ever made. On the one hand, to manage and develop the property that has been passed along for generations, gives a feeling of working on something that is bigger than yourself, which I find enormously satisfying. On the other hand, it is also exciting to contribute to the balancing of "mother earth": for future generations, as a farmer you hold the key to the energy transition. Our work is crucial for human prosperity, consisting of everything from microbiology to world politics.



Eva Weijber

Farmer, Landowner and Part of the Swedish Landowners' Organization

I would just like to say, if you are interested in becoming a female farmer, speak up, because naturally nobody will ask you. In the common perception today, "women are not strong enough to operate in agriculture, and they certainly do not drive tractors." Unfortunately, this silly misconception remains to be the true for women in agriculture in Sweden. There are still very few women in the decision-making process of agriculture, i.e. farmers and landowners. Traditionally, in farming families, the eldest son inherits the agricultural and estate properties, leading to a lack of women in agriculture. However, I believe there is hope. If we compare the ownership of agricultural land in Sweden, to the ownership Swedish forest, almost 40 % are owned by women with several re-enforcing influential female networks. Hopefully, agriculture will follow together with a greater female influence in the future.

WOMEN FOR THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE

I am an agronomist by training and I have been working on the biodiversity area since 2017. Moreover, I have complimented my basic training with a master's degree on public policies.

After living 10 years in Paris, where I was working at the Foundation for research on biodiversity, bringing together science and civil society concerns, I moved to Brussels and started working for Bird Life in 2021.

Currently I am working as a Policy officer on Agriculture files but also more broadly on land-use topics such as Bioenergy or Forest. My basic training and my general knowledge on biodiversity dynamics have been some real assets in my current job which is quite technical in the end.

I also am working with the EU institutions and the different stakeholders involved in the food and farming system, to ensure that public policies address the intertwined biodiversity and climate crisis. This can be done by putting in place policies that seek to conserve and restore nature and/or through system transformation towards more nature-friendly practices. Finally, I am convinced that tackling biodiversity loss and climate change needs to include social aspects.

"Be perseverant and to learn from your failures..."

Challenges of your journey

There are quite many, but I would mention the fact that it is difficult to get your chance when you are starting a career and that building a network is something that takes time.

And it is not especially fitting well with moving from one country to another. The second one, is the conciliation between work and being a parent.

One of the biggest misconception of women in agriculture is that we need men to help us. I think that women, whatever the sector, are proving to be extremely efficient and successful.



Marilda Dhaskali

EU Agriculture and Bioenergy Policy Officer, Bird Life

Moreover, due to the gendered education we have received, we have developed more "caring" skills which have been identified more and more as essential in team work or management.

If a woman would want to get into my domain, I would tell her to be perseverant and to learn from her failures.

WOMEN FOR THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE

My current profession includes the combination of a fifth-generation farmer and the CEO of Farm Foundation. Farm Foundation is a 90-year-old food and agriculture think tank/do tank with a mission of building trust and understanding at the intersection of agriculture and society.

I'm what I call a boomerang farm kid, first leaving the farm for a career in London in finance and strategy, then coming back to the food and ag sector. I say that the "back of my cv/resume" is more important than the front, meaning my upbringing by my family on our farm.

In addition, my experiences studying, living and working abroad and attending Harvard for my MBA have been two key enablers of my career path.

My first steps back into food and agriculture after working abroad were when I purchased a farm with my two daughters and when my family launched an organic gourmet packaged food company. Those events brought me back to food and agriculture. After we sold our food company, I then founded my own company to help food and agriculture companies navigate all of the change in our sector. That is the moment when my CEO pathway started. First for an AgTech company, later for an agricultural service group and now as CEO of Farm Foundation, where I have the privilege to

"We value diversity of thought, experience and perspective and diversity in all ways"

help lead a period of growth and transformation to position us for our next century.

Challenges in life

The key challenge has been navigating my different roles at different stages in life – my professional roles of the farm, as well as wife, mother, and my role in our family farming operation. I've been grateful for how being an early adopter of technology helped facilitate balancing these different roles, being an early telecommuter, virtual and hybrid worker before that became a term people used.

Women united in Agriculture

For women in agriculture, there is an importance to emphasize the possibility of a woman at the head of farm or estate. As a farm family that has an all female next generation, my daughters have asked me to stand up and highlight the role of women as key decision makers and leaders. For example, using terms like, "the farmer, he or she," is one thing they've asked me to highlight when I'm at the table or in the room with other industry leaders as well as telling our own story.



Shari Rogge-Fidler
Farmer and CEO of Farm Foundation

I would encourage women to work in the agriculture sector. This is one of the best times for food and agriculture overall due to the significant investments, growth and innovation in our sector, with opportunities for all people, including women. There is something for everyone, whether in technology and innovation, at the farm level, research, finance, policy and more.

In my own experience at Farm Foundation I have the pleasure of working with women on our board, our staff, in our premier thought leadership program, our partners, and in our suite of NextGen programs. We value diversity of thought, experience and perspective and diversity in all ways, so I have the pleasure of too many great moments to count collaborating with women in our field.

10/03/2023

WOMEN FOR THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE

I was born and raised in the beautiful town of Kastanies of the Prefecture of Evros, a few kilometers from the border with Turkey. For the last 3 years, I am a resident of New Orestiada.

I graduated from the Department of Social Administration and Political Science of the Democritus University of Thrace. During my undergraduate studies, I worked as a notary assistant. However, since an early age my passion lied in agriculture as I grew up within a family of farmers.

As a result, I was involved in the agricultural sector professionally while completing my postgraduate studies at the Department of Rural Development and Food of the Democritus University of Thrace. As a young farmer but also as a woman, I realized that women's ideas and voices in the society should be heard more. That is why I felt that is my duty to participate in the Municipal Council of Youth Orestiada as a city councilor. In my spare time, I write about agricultural- political- social content on different sites.

Coming from a family with an agricultural background, taking over also my parents' love for nature, combined with my ideas, boldness and academic background, I did not hesitate to make the decision to become a farmer, alongside my family. We are blessed to reside in an area consisting of good fertile soils that can give a successful production.

"Women working together can produce spectacular results."

The crops usually we put in are wheat, sunflower, cotton, and rice.

Challenges of your journey

The female presence may have been vital in agriculture for decades, but it does not cease to be disputed. I personally have experienced some negative treatment based on my gender. However, all these challenges have persuaded me even more to prove that a woman can be just as a man in agriculture.

Along those lines, one of the biggest misconceptions that I have faced is that some people still believe that women can only cope with some type of work or roles, such as being a mother, or a wife and not the role of a farmer. In my opinion, this perception is wrong. Throughout the years, the female farmer has strived to provide for her family and battled her fights as an invisible hero.



Ioanna MOUNTZIDOU
Young Farmer in Greece

Women united in Agriculture

Due to the challenges, I have addressed before, some women are hesitant to work in the agricultural sector. However, my advice to them would be to never give up. If you really want to succeed, do not dream of success but work towards achieving it. I would definitely encourage young women as myself to try working in the agricultural sector.

Even though, it is one of my wishes to work with a female farmer or women in the agricultural sector, I still did not have the opportunity. But I am positive that it will happen in the future and that women working together can produce spectacular results.

07/03/2023

WOMEN FOR THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE

I grew up on a farm in Cornwall, in the UK. After University, I left to work in the humanitarian sector—managing projects in conflict areas. But with time I felt a need to return to my

agricultural roots and left the humanitarian sector to complete an MBA in the Food and Agriculture industries. This connected me to the RISE Foundation in Brussels where, for over 10 years, I worked on developing ideas for policy pathways that would deliver a sustainable agricultural system in Europe. With each report we launched, we kept returning to the issue of soil health, without which sustainable agriculture will never be achieved. This led me to the Soil Heroes Foundation, where I am currently the Executive Director. The foundation's raison d'être is finding and sharing how soil health can be improved.

Also, towards the end of 2021, following a long held passion of growing and producing my own recipes, I launched my own business, growing blackcurrants, and producing artisan crème de cassis.

The goals of your companies

The overall goal of the Soil Heroes Foundation is to stimulate and establish a regenerative society where the restoration of soil health, soil biodiversity and the production of food with a higher nutrient density is central. To do this we work with Klompe Farm in the Netherlands to trial regenerative practices and gather data on their impact and we share this widely with farmers, policy makers, academics, investors and industry to show what is possible, and to give farmers the practical

"Do it! Agriculture is at the frontier of so many challenges we face today."

tools and knowledge to transition their own systems. Right now we are carrying out evidence-based proof of practice projects on functional biodiversity, water, capacity, new regenerative crops and soon, the relationship between soil health, and the nutritional quality of the crop. At le Prunellier, I get to put that learning into my own production of blackcurrants - albeit currently on a small scale! I manage the black-currant bushes (pruning, taking cuttings and composting). And then produce the crème de cassis from the fruit. It's early days, but after one year it's already in shops throughout Belgium - and served in a number of Michelin starred restaurants.

Have you faced challenges?

My career has been a steep learning curve. Changing careers: from humanitarian, and back to agriculture, and policy, means that you don't have the option to build up your knowledge gradually from your first job, but leap in with both feet. Looking back on my career today, I have been exceedingly lucky to have worked with wonderful peers, both women and men who have helped me and guided me throughout my working life.

What are the misconceptions about women in Agriculture?

In my opinion there is not so much a misconception about women working in



Annabelle Williams
Executive director of Soil Heroes Foundation and founder/owner of Le Prunellier

agriculture from the non-profit side. However, there is certainly a marked lack of women farmers. Agriculture is still often seen as a man's job, and traditional role models, inheritance and the lack of access to land play a significant role in this.

Women united in Agriculture

Do it! Agriculture is at the frontier of so many of the challenges we face today - on climate change, environmental protection, food security, human health, and rural development. And how we farm is going to play a fundamental role in how we succeed in addressing these challenges. There are amazing people in agriculture - not least in the regenerative sector - innovating and trialling new ways to farm - for taste, nutritional quality, reduced emissions, increased biodiversity, better livelihoods and so on. It's an exciting and positive time to be in this sector.

13/03/2023

WOMEN FOR THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE

I am a Public Affairs professional passionate about food systems: from Agriculture, Biodiversity, Climate to Zero waste. I moved to Brussels fifteen years ago with the desire to support ambitious, evidence-based EU policies and drive the sustainability transformation together with all actors in the agrifood chain.... an ambition that motivates me still today. I am a strong believer in collaboration and co-creation for the greater good.

Your career

It all started with working and living at a farm for one year, followed by studies of Agricultural Sciences and a PhD in Soil Ecology at the Technical University of Munich, Germany. I was triggered by combining science and agricultural practice, I started an academic career as the lead of an interdisciplinary research project on sustainable energy production from plants. The interest in a more holistic view on agriculture initiated my first career move from academia to a certification body where I served as expert on international organic farming and forest management certification schemes. This allowed me to collaborate with all actors along the value chain, including food producers and processors, retailers, and the food service sector. While representing my company and other certifiers towards national government and EU-institutions, my focus shifted towards government relations and public affairs. As a result, I represented the European Organic Certifiers Association, EOCC, for more than 6 years the EU

"The agrifood sector offers a plethora of interesting opportunities"

institutions and headed the European Water Stewardship initiative, EWS, a non-governmental organisation promoting sustainable water management. In 2014, I became the EU Lead on advocacy and

stakeholder engagement of Tetra Pak e.g. as board member and active leader in industry associations. Meanwhile, I am advising organisations and companies to set up meaningful relations with institutions and thought leaders with focus on circular economy, packaging sustainability, biodiversity, and climate policies in the EU. In all these positions, I greatly enjoyed collaborating with partners to drive change and sharing experiences with others e.g. in trainings with agricultural inspectors, lectures to master students at the university or during capacity building programs on water stewardship.

Today, As a government relations and public affairs professional, I facilitate the exchange between of government officials, industry, academia and civil society organisations and initiate joint actions. It is all about co-creating the appropriate conditions to achieve the shared objectives such as climate change mitigation, biodiversity restoration or increased resilience and sustainability of agrifood chains. I would describe myself as an agent of change and broker to establish meaningful partnerships and alliances.



Sabine von Wirén-Lehr
Director European Affairs at Tetra Pak Group

As a woman with no agricultural background, I had to catch up with the practical knowledge. A challenging task but fun and an absolute must to become a trusted professional in the agrifood sector.

Women in agriculture

For the agriculture sector - not only for women: openness for new ideas and building inclusive partnerships is often considered a waste of time and staying on a firm position is considered a strength.

However, the biggest advantage for women, is that they are more trusted to manage interactions with others in an efficient and mindful way. In my case the engagement with policy makers or actors in the EU policy area.

I would encourage all women to go for it! The agrifood sector offers a plethora of interesting opportunities. you can make a real difference and contribute to one of the fundamental sectors of our society. Get solid (practical) expertise, stay curious, build and maintain reliable (women) networks. From my experience, I learnt that we can help and encourage each other.

14/03/2023

WOMEN FOR THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE

I am a French native, with family roots in Germany, and have lived in Brussels for more than 17 years. I'm a mother of a 3-year-old boy and am excited by the fascinating challenge of raising a human being with gender equality as one of his key values.

I am a political scientist by training and an expert in European law-making; what is commonly known as a trained lobbyist.

I started my career in the agriculture sector more than 15 years ago, when I joined the German farmers' union in Brussels. During my nine years there, I found my place by walking the talk with farmers. When it was time to take on a new challenge, I moved to the industry association Fertilizers Europe as Senior Manager for Agriculture and Environment, working on key topics for the fertilizer industry. This helped me discover a whole new world: plant nutrition. Did you know, for instance, that 50% of the world is fed thanks to mineral fertilizers?

Your career & the challenges

Today I work for Yara, heading the government relations and external communications team for Europe. The team is very diverse, in terms of culture and background, making it a great place to work! I am also truly inspired by Yara's mission to responsibly feed the world while protecting the planet. I meet regularly with European decision-makers and other stakeholders to explain how our 100 years of agronomic knowledge, precision and digital farming tools, and low-carbon fertilizers help decarbonize agriculture and support the European Union in delivering

"Women are just as ambitious as men"

on its Green Deal and climate neutrality goals. Starting my career as a non-agronomist, a French national, a woman and a young person (I was 23) inside the German farmers' association was a real journey. At times I felt that I had to fight for a seat at the table. But this was also a very good school, where I learnt a lot about the amazing profession of being a farmer and about lobbying. I also learnt a lot about myself, gaining more confidence about the value I can bring to these organisations.

This experience came in handy during my six years with Fertilizers Europe, as I moved from one male-dominated environment to another. It helped me not feel awkward when presenting to male-only board members during a meeting. Since then, the face of Europe's fertilizer industry has changed as gender balance becomes a top priority. Yara is also part of that change: our overall target is to reach of 40% of women senior leaders by 2025. To get there, in region Europe, we are putting a lot of efforts on recruiting, retaining and developing women in senior positions.

Women in agriculture

One of the main misconceptions is probably that all leaders in the agri-food sector are men. Certainly, there are fewer women in leadership positions, but that does not prevent women from being leaders.



Tiffanie Stephani

Vice-President, European Government relations and External communications at Yara International

I can think of several amazing leaders in our agriculture sector, such as the former Agriculture Commissioner Mariann Fischer Boel or Christiane Lambert as French and European farmers' president. Women are just as ambitious as men – and we need to create opportunities, for both men and women, to thrive equally and dare to do it! As women, especially in male-dominated environments, too often we hesitate to speak up. But that's wrong. It's important to express yourself and bring in your own perspective. I also encourage women colleagues to create a safe space in their work environment. At Yara, we have created the "Women in Agronomy" mentoring program, which I'm part of. It's key to building trust and confidence.

Next to that, I am part of a great informal network for the European policy bubble called "agri ladies". We meet monthly to network and to discuss the talk of town or how to find the right work-life balance. This is a real breather from day-to-day business and an amazing way to meet truly knowledgeable women.

15/03/2023

WOMEN FOR THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE

I am the Counsellor and Head of Section for Agriculture, Fisheries and Environment at the Mission of Canada to the EU. I arrived in Brussels in August 2022 with my husband and son (and

our dog) to start our European adventures and we are loving it. I am a Turkish immigrant to Canada. I have lived in Bangladesh, Chile, Italy, Iraq, UK and Turkey and moved to Ottawa, Canada, in August 2001 to do my Masters degree. After only a month in Ottawa, I loved it, especially my Canadian friends who made me feel so welcome and part of the community, and decided I wanted to make Canada my home. Six years later, I finally became a proud Canadian citizen. I then joined the Canadian public service, working in the trade policy and negotiations sphere at Global Affairs Canada and later at Agriculture and Agri-food Canada. I completed a 5-year posting in Washington, DC, USA as Canada's Agriculture Counsellor last summer and was cross-posted to Brussels.

It is truly an honour to represent Canada in the EU and previously in the US, two of Canada's most important partners. As a new Canadian I am always happy to share the welcoming story of my adoptive country and spread my love of Canada around the world. In more detail, my profession consists of deepening partnerships with the EU on food, agriculture, environment and fisheries

"Next time you walk into a meeting, test your preconceptions and make sure to ask for everyone's views."

issues. Promoting Canadian interests. Understanding the different viewpoints and finding common areas in which to work together.

Challenges of my career

There are many challenges, but mainly: juggling life (family & friends) and work

and finding the work-life balance that works for me; accepting that I am not perfect, I cannot and should not do it all, and that it's OK to make mistakes; taking time to celebrate successes (my own and others'). Oh and public speaking (but I still do it as I can only get better).

Working in Agriculture

The preconception that women (or immigrants) cannot be leaders or influential decision-makers. This is a generalization and both men and women can have this unconscious bias. Next time you walk into a meeting, test your preconceptions and make sure to ask for everyone's views. As for working as women in agriculture, go for it! You do not need to be an expert in agriculture or a farmer to work in the sector. Many transferable and diverse skills are needed in agriculture - trade



Gizem Eras

Counsellor and Head of Section (Agriculture, Fisheries and Environment at Canada's Mission to the European Union).

policy, government relations, scientists, innovators, environmentalists, communications experts... Do not stop yourself from applying for a job because you feel you lack the necessary knowledge or expertise – just go for it!

I am very lucky to have been supported by great people, especially many fabulous women, who have taken the time to proactively give me direction, positive feedback and/or recognize my work publicly, with senior management. I was also part of Women in International Trade DC, a great group of women and sorority sharing experiences and knowledge! Best advice - to take your seat at the table (not the back) in a meeting and contribute/speak. It all helped me get where I am today...

16/03/2023

WOMEN FOR THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE

I am French- Cambodian based in Thailand and working in Asia for more than 15 years now. I am the happy mother of two children, we are a very international family nature and food lovers.

I work now for the FAO as their climate foresight and scenarios development expert.

My background is in political philosophy which taught me to critically examine political decisions and the roles of policy. It equipped me with a comprehensive understanding of notions such as "Justice, Equality, and Democracy"... but I needed more, I needed to go beyond the concepts and confront realities and worldviews.

I got the opportunities to work as an intern first in a French NGO which then brought me to my first mission in Sudan and so on... I discovered the discipline of non-traditional securities, WATER, FOOD, ENERGY AND HEALTH and that I was passionate by risk governance and management with the leitmotif of acting today for tomorrow!

10 years ago, I started working in foresight first as a regional scenarios coordinator in South Asia and then Southeast Asia. I explored different practices and foresight tools always focusing on climate change, food and agriculture.

My profession, in a very concise way, consists of looking at the futures of the food system and identifying trigger of changes that could unlock sustainable, low emission and resilient agri-food systems.

"Don't be afraid of failures, explore and try again ways you can be more impactful and inclusive."

By exploring the future, we developed inclusive agriculture pathways that leave no people and ecosystem behind. My work is the work of a team that are committed.

Challenges along the way

Challenges are part of any one career nowadays. It is said that to grow you must fail! To be honest some of the most critical challenges I faced, were and still are with myself! It is not easy to understand that people have different interests, pace and commitments. Rowing together in harmony is the most difficult challenge I had to face and that I am still working on.

Another challenge is LOW-TRUST in data and science or the other extreme OVER-TRUST in only data and science, most of my work is based on creating this safe space of discussions and reflections on the future of the agri-food systems, with such strong beliefs people tend to hide in the realm of inactions.

Women in agriculture

One of the biggest misconceptions about women is that our emotions, empathy, mother role in the society is somehow



Dr. Rathana Peou

Norbert- Munns

International Specialist on Climate Change
Foresight and Policy Analysis, UN FAO

incompatible with efficiency and productivity, while typically women in rural societies produce agricultural crops, process and prepare food, collect fuel and water, engage in trade and marketing, ensure market access etc. Women are good enough in a family environment but not in a modern or professional ones, we need to change the narrative! I encourage women not to be afraid of failure, explore and try again ways you can be more impactful and inclusive.

I am very proud of being a woman and of my Asian heritage. I was lucky enough to meet inspiring Asian women working for a more competitive and sustainable agriculture sector, we help and support each other. I guess, in this case, it is more than a sorority occasion it really refers to the origin of the sorority and this lifelong sense of belonging! It brings joy to meet people like you that want to transform food systems and who are driving that transition in all different ways.

WOMEN FOR THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE



Judith Deblon

Farmer

I am 28 years old Belgian native, and I live in Tiège, a small village in the municipality of Jalhay. I studied at the University of Gembloux where

I obtained my master's degree in environmental sciences and technologies in 2018. Once I graduated, I worked at the university for six months, but very quickly realised that it didn't suit me for a number of reasons.

So I decided to take over my parents' dairy farm. After three years working there full time I moved in, on 18 October, 2022. My mother and I are farm managers with 160 dairy cows on dynamic rotating pasture. We have nearly 100 Ardennes spotted sheep who value the meadows with high biological value. We also have 120 hectares, mainly meadows, but also maize, fodder beets, spelt and wheat.

Your career

We are 3 full-time workers on the farm. My daily rhythm is dictated by morning and evening milking. Our priority is that our animals are cared for on time and do not miss anything. Feeding and cleaning protocols are in place for their well-being. When on-call work is finished, I work in the buildings renovation) and in the plot where my cows graze (fences, development of waterways, etc.) and of course in the office.

"Personally, I never thought that being a woman was an obstacle to work as a farmer."

I am lucky to be very well surrounded, which allows me to dedicate time to my many projects that are part of the agro-ecological trend. What I really like about my job is that we touch on a lot of different areas, no two days are the same, that's what makes the job so exciting.

Women in Agriculture

In the agricultural environment, women often occupy a secondary function, and are rarely at the head of a farm. Mindsets are changing though, and I think it's a backward vision that no longer makes sense today. Personally, I had never thought that being a woman was an obstacle to work as a farmer. I'm lucky to have my mom as an example who showed me it was possible to do what you love while ignoring a lot of pre- and misconceptions.

Even if I have already experienced certain embarrassing situations (misogynistic remarks, lack of credibility vis-à-vis a sales representative, etc.) benevolence weighs much more in the balance. There is a lot of admiration when you embark on a life project such as this, so if you like this environment, if you are ready to give it all, and that you are well surrounded, go for it!

WOMEN FOR THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE


 am a 33-year-old Belgian woman. I grew up abroad (a short while in Africa, then in Europe), and came back to Belgium to study political science and sociology at university. I was not destined to engage in forest and forestry, as I am interested in art and society. No one in my family is involved in politics, forests or agriculture. Yet, I come from a family of intellectuals and love wandering nature. Retrospectively, these characteristics certainly led me to where I am now.

I studied political science and sociology. After that, I completed a PhD in political science, about the external action of the EU in international forest politics. In that context I investigated how EU internal circumstances drive EU external action on forests. This is how I got my current position as a Forest Policy Officer at the European Landowners' Organization. This is also how I got my other job, as a university lecturer.

Your career

My job as a Policy Officer consists in bridging ELO members and the EU. It comprises understanding, analysing, and influencing EU policymaking regarding ELO members' preferences. It also consists of understanding and analysing national forest policies and politics and keeping local foresters updated about ongoing EU politics and policies that may have an incidence on their work.

"Understanding political phenomena and being a political actor is for everyone!"

There are two other elements to this work that should not be underestimated. The first one is to make semantic choices. Words and discourses are performative. Referring to forest and forestry related phenomena with carefully selected words allow to frame political debates in a way that reflects reality and do not convey unwanted implied meanings. The second one pertains to another temporality: observing long-term trends in policymaking, and determining how EU policy issues evolve, detached from a day-to-day work.

My job as a University Lecturer consists of teaching Political Science and Biology students to acquire knowledge about EU policymaking and thinking clearly. Concerning forests specifically, I do my best to show them that things are not what they seem to be, and that they should overcome preconceptions.

Challenges along the way

One of the biggest challenges I face is that I evolve in a male-centric environment, where women are given consideration, but I have the feeling that we have a different status. For instance, it occurred to me a few times that speakers and guests at a



Dr. Pauline Pirlot
 Policy Officer at ELO

conference mistook me for an administrative assistant and insisted for me to bring them coffee before coffee time (haha). Imagine their faces when I took the floor as keynote speaker. I also had questions concerning future maternity leave during job interviews. This is directly related to my me as a woman. Things are changing though. I believe such occurrences are ever less common.

I believe a creeping misconception about women is that they are not land managers, nor foresters, so they can't possibly get involved in forest-related matters. However, this misconception emanates from very specific groups of people, and I find overall women are as welcomed as men, and are recognised as competent as men. To women who want to get into policymaking and/or teaching about traditionally male subject, I would say: go for it! Understanding political phenomena and being a political actor is for everyone!

WOMEN FOR THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE

For 32 years I have lived and worked with my family on a farm near Münster in Westphalia, Germany. The focus on my farm is arable farming. After my agricultural training and my agricultural studies, I got to know many agricultural companies in the advisory service.

Your background

Volunteering and supporting the interest of German agriculture and farmers has always been important to me. I have been a chairwoman of the district Münster in our agricultural association for 12 years, and I am the first female vice-president of the German Farmers' Association since September 2022.

More women are becoming farmers and running farms. However, this is not reflected in association committees, where women are not represented in key positions. We want to change that. The German Farmers' Association aims to support women and encourage them to take on important positions in the association. By providing suggestions on how to achieve this goal and with the collaborative persistence and advocacy of key supporters who recognize women's potential, we are on our way to empowering women in our association. As Vice President, I want to be a trailblazer for women in agriculture, and for them to participate in entrepreneurs' committee on a voluntary basis.

The empowerment of women through coaching, mentoring and the formation of -

"Female skills such as communication, empathy, teamwork, etc. are extremely important for success."

a strong network are key aspects in the women entrepreneurs' committee. The empowerment of women through coaching, mentoring and the building of a strong network are key aspects in the women entrepreneurs' committee. Furthermore, we address the topics of finance, taking over a business and social security.

Challenges along the way

Balancing work, family and volunteer work requires a lot of organisation and a family that stands behind and supports you and your commitment. Our agriculture is facing very big challenges that we can only overcome together. Female skills such as communication, empathy, teamwork (to name just a few) are extremely important for success.

Women in agriculture

Women have always played an important role on farms, not just as family members who work there, but also increasingly as entrepreneurs and managers. Women provide important input for questions of sustainability, set up their own branches of business and manage them responsibly.

It is important that women are also represented in the German Farming -



Susanne Schulze Bockeloh

Vice-President of the German Farmers' Association

Association and in German politics. I can only encourage you to get involved in the association's tasks, to speak up courageously and to become visible. Taking your own interests into your own hands, actively participating in discussions, and to critically look at agricultural issues from many angles. It is vital to make your arguments and concepts fit for the future. Start to look for supporters and join networks in which you can exchange ideas and strengthen them.

Our women entrepreneur committees in many state farmers' associations connect great female farmers who are active in different areas and want to get involved in agriculture. Such networks serve to inspire, encourage and strengthen.

22/03/2023

WOMEN FOR THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE

I am Norma Hoagland, age 72 from Kansas, USA. My husband Joe and I own and operate two beef cattle ranches and a feedlot in Kansas. We own and operate citrus orchards in the Rio Grande Valley in Texas. We have three children, three grandchildren, and I am an author and biographer.

Your journey

I grew up on a dairy farm in Kansas, on land my family has owned since 1866. On that farm, we raise corn and soybeans. I have always been involved in agriculture. When Joe and I married, we dreamed of running our own beef cattle business. Joe was involved in his businesses in the city, and so I was heavily involved in the daily management of our ranches.

Your career

My university training was as a teacher, so I researched and learned about animal husbandry, nutrition and grass management. I became our artificial insemination technician. I computerized our cattle pedigree information and performance data, then began to do the same for other breeders as we established our own breed of cattle - Black Herefords.

"Do your job and recognition will follow."

Challenges along the way

In the male-dominated cattle industry, there is always the challenge for a woman to be taken seriously. One personal example was in my classes to get my Artificial Insemination license, I was one of 2 women in the class. We were called out and treated differently than the men. However, the overall challenge in agriculture is profitability, for everyone.

The biggest misconception is that a woman can't possibly do the work or know anything! Customers would call our ranch to ask about our breeding bulls and insist they had to talk to my husband.

I would encourage a woman to forge ahead. This is a particularly interesting time to be in agriculture as food becomes more a focus in our countries. The future may be in land management, as land ownership is becoming cost-prohibitive, so a woman can channel her interest into managing for others. If you are lucky enough to own your farm or ranch, don't get discouraged or angry at others. Do your job, and recognition will follow.



Norma Hoagland

Ranch manager

Women in agriculture

During the years I was actively running our ranches, there were not a lot of organizations or projects with other women. We women would visit during cattle seminars and encourage each other. I did a number of children's classroom lessons on agriculture, working with women teachers in my community. Currently, I see there are many more organizations that promote women in agriculture and give them a chance to work together to show the face of agriculture to our urban communities. That is a good thing!

WOMEN FOR THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE

As a plant biologist, I have been working in the field of environment and biodiversity since 2015. I completed my initial education with a training in Development, Production, Management and Strategy in bio-industries. I started working in a laboratory, then after the birth of my second child, entrepreneurship attracted me. After training as a florist, I started to create and manage flower and decoration shops, which I later sold. I continued with a one-year experience in the USA, which was not conclusive because it did not correspond to my life project.

Your journey

Mistakes are a great learning opportunity and allow you to bounce back. It was in 2015 that everything started: I joined Polleniz, an association committed to plant and environmental protection, and biodiversity preservation. It was essential for me to invest myself in an organisation that defended an environmental cause.

I quickly took responsibility for the communication department, which did not exist. Everything had to be created and structured. At the same time, I worked as a management attaché (but also for the association's elected representatives). During all these years, I learned about the structures' regulations and activities.

"Women have their full place in the field of environment."

I am now Director of Strategy and Communication of NEOVIZ Group, SAS holding of POLLENIZ, of BIONEO (pestcontrol service provider prioritising alternative and innovative solutions), of GIRPA (contaminant analysis laboratory) and of ALTERRE ECO (environmental research, consultancy and strategy office).

The group is transverse and involved in the ONE HEALTH, FARM TO FORK and biodiversity recovery strategies. I lead all the actions carried out by NEOVIZ Group to communicate with its environment and on environmental strategy. Communication and project management are combined in a function that allows me to accompany the group in objectifying its strategic choices: reflecting on the changes to be made to the group's business model and choices of investments or repositioning.

Challenges along the way

I have faced several challenges in my life, namely the creation and management of a company. The creation and structuring of a communication department and my function as an executive attaché. Agriculture may seem to be a male-oriented environment, but women bring a new vision necessary to



Aline Coulon

Director of Strategy and Communication
NEOVIZ Group

Women in agriculture

its evolution concerning environmental issues. Men and women complement each other in this respect because they do not have the same structure of thoughts. Also, the synergy that can be created between individuals is essential, and after all, opportunities to move forward are born from encounters.

Women have their full place in the field of environment. However, this requires a major professional commitment that must be reconciled with one's personal life.

WOMEN FOR THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE

If someone had told me when I finished my degree in Journalism and Social Communication that one day I would be breeding Lusitano horses, cows, fattening black pigs and have an oyster farm, I would have laughed out loud!

Your background

From journalism to banking, to promoting award-winning specialty foods deriving from a family farm in South West France specializing in Pruneaux d'Agen, to becoming a mother, to actively joining local politics in Switzerland. Where I lived most of my life, to being at the head of a large family owned historical estate in Portugal, my cursus is not typical.

Your career & challenges

Directing a large forestry and agricultural estate is an honour and a challenge I face with pride and defiance, thanks to a formidable management team. The challenges are daily and have a continuous learning curve. Therefore one must be open to flexibility and be willing to continue constantly questioning oneself. The aim is not to shine in the limelight but for the estate to be productive and profitable for our workforce's welfare, which is 35 strong.

Evolving in a Man's World in which I was not brought up is not easy, and I feel tolerated but not fully accepted.

"Be a farmer, be a warrior, don't give up. Fall down, pick yourself up and start all over again. Love what you do."

Sometimes one has to be cunning like a fox and use our apparent feminine weaknesses as our strength.

Our main forestry production is cork, our main agricultural products are rice and cattle. There is extra care in the way we manage the property as half of it is part of the Natural Reserve of the Sado Estuary. Business and Nature grow hand-in-hand.

Women in agriculture

The biggest misconception today is to get the public to understand that a male or female farmer should not be seen only as a person in a smelly overall with muddy rubber boots, a straw hat on their head, and a basket over the arm. Look at the emojis that depict farmers!

Farming today is a business requiring knowledge and skills in crop and animal management, development, marketing strategies, technologies,



Stephanie Gicot

Estate manager & farmer

HR and communication. To be a farmer, be a warrior, don't give up. Fall down, pick yourself up and start all over again. Love what you do.

And yet my passion is gemology but that's a different story...

WOMEN FOR THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE

I am French and British, based in Brussels, where I've just started as CropLife International's President and CEO. I'm thrilled to be leading such a dynamic organisation that is at the forefront of ensuring access to agricultural innovations to tackle global challenges around climate change, biodiversity, and food security.

Your journey

I grew up on a citrus and avocado farm in Portugal, so I understand the challenges farmers have to deal with on a daily basis, from changing weather patterns to hydric stress, in order to grow nutritious food. I've had the opportunity to dedicate much of my life to forging an ever-stronger relationship between Europe and Latin America, particularly Brazil, a country I lived in for many years. I'm happy to be able to leverage my international background, passion for agriculture, and experience in economic diplomacy to support of CropLife International's work towards enabling sustainable food systems.

Joining CropLife International is a new challenge for me, and I believe any leader coming into an organisation needs time to listen and learn from the team's expertise.

"Be bold and put your own mask on first."

I see my role as offering support and vision to my colleagues, our members, and our global network in support of our common goals. I'm looking forward to discovering what this chapter of my professional life will look like.

Challenges Facing Women

As someone from a multicultural background, I often underestimated the underlying beliefs and biases that underpin opinions. Brazil, a country where I've spent many years, was once a net food importer grappling with widespread food insecurity, but, thanks to agricultural innovations matched with smart public policies, is now a leading actor in feeding the world. That journey was not easy.

Today, climate change poses an evolving threat as new pests and diseases emerge, renew in intensity and enter new territories. Climate change is resulting in more instability and unpredictability in our food supply. We must ensure safe and effective plant science products reach the market and get into the hands of the millions of farm families that we depend on to feed our own families.



Emily Rees

President and CEO
 CropLife International

Empowering women in agriculture

Even though there is a growing number of women transforming the agricultural sector, the perception is that this is still a male-dominated world. Our challenge is to bridge the gap in that perception to elevate the voices of women who are already playing a leading role in the sector – from the lab to the farm. CropLife International has a huge platform to raise the visibility of these Female Food Heroes, and I am eager to lend my voice and experience to this effort.

I would tell other women, "be bold and put your own mask on first." I think women carry a huge mental burden in terms of societal expectations in all aspects of their lives, from family carer, to domestic duties, and career performance. That's why we have the responsibility to look after ourselves first so that we can become the innovators, leaders, visionaries we all have the potential to be.

28/03/2023

WOMEN FOR THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE

I grew up in the Dutch Antilles (Curacao). My experience of living on this beautiful island and traveling in the Caribbean and Central and South America gave me a

special interest and passion for biodiversity, nature, and the mission to preserve our beautiful world. So, it was not a surprise that I chose to study environmental science in the Netherlands.

Your background

After completing my studies, I worked as a manager for the water board, municipality and several governmental organisations focusing on issues concerning the “sweet spot” of biodiversity, landscape, environment, and agriculture. It was during this time that I met my husband Jeroen who grew up on an arable farm in the Hoeksche Waard (20 km south of Rotterdam).

Around 20 years ago Jeroen took over the Klompe family farm and started farming conventionally. However, because of the increased (amount) of inputs we were having to use, the smaller margins and decreasing economic revenues, we decided it was time to make a drastic change and we started farming according to the guidelines of nature instead of fighting them. I chose to leave my job with the government in order to support my husband in this new direction of farm management with my knowledge of biodiversity, soil health, water systems and other environmental topics.

"We need more female power in agriculture."

It was only around 8 years ago that we discovered that the way we are farming is called regenerative agriculture. When we started to change our farm management systems, regenerative agriculture was not yet a known concept in the Netherlands nor in Northwest Europe (NWE) – certainly not on large commercial farms. We mainly found our knowledge from sources in Australia, North America, and South Africa. Through trials on our own farm, we have developed an implementation of regenerative agricultural on a large scale commercial arable farm.

Your career

To catalyze the knowledge of the implementation on the regenerative agricultural guidelines in NWE my husband and I started the Soil Heroes Foundation. Our main goal is to empower farmers to start the transition and execute regenerative agricultural practices on their own farms. Currently I continue to work with my husband on the farm management and support the Executive Director of the Soil Heroes Foundation (Annabelle Williams) with the project designs of several proof of practice projects, funding, several knowledge sharing activities and some aspects of the monitoring and evaluation.



Mellany Klompe

Farmer & Soil Award Co-winner

Challenges of women in agriculture

The main challenge we face is to find a “translation” of the regenerative guidelines and practices to the large-scale commercial way of farming. The more hectares involved the more impact we can achieve. This means that we also need to find a new balance between ecological revenues and economic revenues. The challenge on a larger scale is that ecology needs to have its place on the balance-sheet of our current food system. Every day we are confronted with the urgency, just think about climate change and biodiversity loss.

We need more female power in agriculture. It is not a coincidence that we are talking about “mother earth”. Women will play an important role in catalyzing the transition of farming. I hope that my role can be an example of this. The importance of the transition in agriculture is increasing every day. If you really want to contribute in this, take your part in it because we can’t allow to wait any longer.

WOMEN FOR THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE

I am a passionate farmer and forester and have been campaigning for landowners in the European Parliament since 2019. Before that, I was mayor in my home municipality in a rural region

in Austria. As an MEP, I stand up for a strong domestic agriculture and forestry sector and for rural regions worth living in.

Your background

Originally I worked in a bank, but then I married into farming, and since I am a proud farmer and forester. I have held various positions in politics and in our representative body, the Chamber of Agriculture in Austria. In 2019, I was nominated as a candidate of the Austrian Farmers' Union for the European elections. Since then, I have been pursuing this task with humility and joy.

Your career

My daily routine consists of meetings, negotiations and committee meetings in Brussels from Monday to Thursday, where I work to ensure that our farmers and foresters voices are heard in EU lawmaking. From Friday to Sunday, I am on the road in Austria, visiting farms and family owned rural businesses, taking part in events and discussions and seeking dialogue with farmers. In this way, I get valuable input for my work and serve as a contact person for landowners and their concerns and wishes towards the EU.

"Challenges are part of the game"

Challenges are part of the game, I would say. For example it was (and is) not always easy for women, to make their voices heard in the often male dominated political representation in rural areas, especially as a woman not having grown up in a farm. In a farm. In recent years, we have achieved a lot in this respect, women take up space now on political boards and panels, but there is still a lot to do.

Another example, are the legal disadvantages we face which are not discussed enough.

I think of stories of women who were in despair due to their husbands death and not being able to sign a bank account authorisation to pay for the funeral of their loved one. When a business is managed jointly, these legal aspects should also be shared fairly to avoid nasty surprises.

The misconceptions in agriculture

We are often seen as the weaker in a sector where physical labour still plays a big role. We are seen a bit like flowers. Some would like to think that we are fragile, delicate. I say: Yes, we are a bit like flowers. We weather the storms, we reach for the sun, we have the strength and determination it takes to grow and blossom.



Simone Schmiedtbauer
Member of European Parliament

To women in agriculture, I would say: Dare and accept challenges. It often happens that men say yes (or no) directly when they are presented with a new opportunity, not even questioning their qualification. Women are much more hesitant and unsure if they are up to the task. I say: Yes, you are. Have the courage and go for it!

Help each other

In the Austrian EPP delegation we were four women and three men at the beginning. While two of the three MEPs had already been in the European Parliament in the previous term, four women were all new. We quickly became one heart and soul and supported each other through the challenging role of being a fresh MEP. We exchanged messages about things and customs in the house that we had to learn and helped with the little things, like tips on how to put our teams together or shortcuts in the endless corridors of the Parliament. We are all still close friends today.

WOMEN FOR THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE



My name is Mildred Nakagwe from Uganda. I am a Consultant working on strengthening solid waste and Faecal Sludge Management Capacity.

This is a project of Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area and the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) in Uganda. I hold a master's degree in international studies from Ewha Womans University, Seoul, Republic of Korea, under the Global Korea Scholarship (GKS) program, and a bachelor's degree in social sciences from Makerere University. I enjoy reading, playing computer games, and learning new languages in my spare time.

Your journey

Previously I worked at SNV Netherlands Development Organisation based in Kampala in 2022 and from 2016 to 2017 worked as a Research Assistant at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Uganda. Currently, I am one of the Uganda representatives for the Korea-Africa Correspondents Program 2023, researching different topics (social, economic, political, and cultural) in Uganda. Initially, I was a Global KOICA Ambassador representing Uganda under the "We Are KOICA (WEKO)" 2021 Program. Getting into the employment industry in Uganda is challenging as it requires at least a Master's degree and an extra set of skills to get hired/contracted.

"I would say never give up and the sky is never the limit..."

This motivated me to apply for a scholarship under the GKS program to further my master's degree. This gave me an opportunity to learn new skills in writing, research, infographics designing, etc. and gain knowledge in policy development on climate change, and green growth. The knowledge and skills I gained enabled me to get hired.

Your career and challenges

My job involves researching solid waste and faecal sludge management issues, green growth, and sustainability. I am writing press releases, articles, and blogs, developing concept notes, creating documentaries and animations to enable communities to understand better what is waste management, and how they can build clean, sustainable communities.

Being an orphan like me, you quickly realise that you must build on your strengths as only a few people are willing to support you in your journey. So one must keep learning to reach one's goals. I have taken the initiative to find opportunities to elevate my life.

Through this, I have learned the skills I have effectively used in the job market.



Mildred Nakagwe

Consultant at the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI)

As a woman in international studies and currently working in communications. The biggest misconception is that one intends to become a diplomat, as it's not widely understood that the international field includes diverse topics from migration to public relations, business, gender studies, climate change, research methodology, etc. Many assume and comment, 'Oh you're quiet or an introvert, you can't manage communications.'. They seem to forget that being an introvert doesn't determine suitability to work in communications but rather the level of creativity. For any woman who wants to work in this domain today, first I would tell them never to give up and the sky is never the limit. I advise them to do short online certificate courses (free/paid) to improve their knowledge and skills based on their interests and learn something new at any given opportunity.

WOMEN FOR THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE

I was not destined for a life in agriculture, although I came from a traditional farming background. Several acts of land expropriation in East Germany that took place during the 20th century changed the family agenda on my side. The tradition of family property being passed on for generations, and estate management, only survived in the form of old family narratives, stories about places of longing from a bygone era.

Your background & career

I started as an apprentice at Deutsche Bank in Berlin, followed law studies at the FU in Berlin and the LSE in London and grew up in an urban area near Hamburg. Things suddenly changed when I met my future husband, who had dedicated himself to rebuilding the former family estate in Saxony after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Love, not a genuine vocation, got me where I am now. A decision that I have never regretted.

Multitasking was the keyword from the start. Marriage, two bar exams still to be passed, five children and the reconstruction of the estate, after 44 years of Communist rule, had to be managed relatively quickly.

My first legal task was the restitution of cultural family property confiscated by the Communist authorities after World War II. Negotiations with public administration and sifting through the trail of paintings

"Women can work in agriculture or any other professional field..."

and furniture archives as well as museums proved to be a rather time consuming issue. Today I am managing the estate buildings, including restoration, maintenance and development and our rural tourism department. I am also the Chairwoman of the Board of the Family Foundation dedicated to local social issues, environmental and monument protection.

Management of book readings and concerts are additional but enchanting sidekicks. Whilst my husband is responsible for the day-to-day agricultural business, we share public relations and lobbying. Daily coordination, arrangements with employees and office work of legal and administrative types are part of the work, and its diversity fascinates me. On the other hand, various and increasingly strenuous aspects have to be mentioned.

Challenges

It is not only us who are directly exposed to climate change and volatile markets. Agriculture also gets caught between multilateral fronts. Social expectations, urbanization and economic restraints intensified by demands for intergenerational justice and sustainable economic activity are increasingly affecting us. Despite costly innovative adjustments and operational innovation, we find ourselves in a constant defensive position.



Felicitas von Carlowitz

Estate Manager & Chairwoman of the Board of the Family Foundation

Women in agriculture

Women can work in agriculture or any other professional field and be just as capable as managers or employees as their male counterparts. For example, two of our four daughters hold a tractor license. Furthermore, technical progress and social change have altered the job profile rapidly over the past fifty years. Millennial-old truths and practices suddenly have to be put to the test. Instead of hard physical work, more soft skills are increasingly needed for sustainable and economically successful agricultural management. Still, statistically, women are underrepresented (see the German Ministry of Agriculture study on women in agriculture Policy Brief (bmel.de)). The prevailing labour shortage may further accelerate the appreciation of the female contribution to modern agriculture and help close outdated gender gaps.

ELO supports women in agriculture, forestry, rural development, climate change, soil, water & air, carbon farming, property rights and land access, renewable energy, trade, sustainable food systems, innovation and related sectors through tangible initiatives and actions.



About the ELO: The ELO is the umbrella organisation for national rural organisations of businesses managing agricultural, forestry and environmental land all over Europe. www.elo.org. Transparency register reference: 36063991244-88

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