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FARMER RESOURCE NETWORK
RESOURCE GUIDE

WOMEN FARMERS

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The value women farmers bring to American agriculture is slowly beginning to receive recognition. The USDA reported that agricultural sales in dollars from female producers increased 50% between 2017 and 2022, and the percentage of female farmers involved in day-to-day operational decisions increased 32%. In addition, women who work the land tend to represent greater racial and ethnic diversity, run smaller, more diversified operations and sell directly to consumers at higher percentages, thus bolstering local economies. Such progress has culminated in 2026 being declared the International Year of the Woman Farmer by the United Nations.

Yet, agriculture remains one of the most gender disproportionate occupations in the United States. American Farmland Trust's delves into the assets and enduring challenges unique to women farmers and recommendations to narrow persistent gender discrepancies. [A Woman's Place: Voices from the Field](#) highlights lessons from women farmers who are cracking the "grass ceiling" and may provide encouragement for the important work ahead.

Farm Aid's Resource Guide for Women Farmers is our effort to ensure women have access to the programs and support that contribute to their success. While resources are provided in categories, many furnish a broader range of useful services. Be sure to explore each resource's website thoroughly to get a complete representation.

SETTING THE CONTEXT

Many women farmers who are also parents often endure notoriously long hours, with little separation between farm work and caring for their home and family — all while facing the everyday stressors of running a farm business. The following articles may prove useful if this scenario resonates with you:

- [Birth and Postpartum Healing for the Farmer](#)
- [The Tricky Balance of Raising Kids and Maintaining a Farm](#)
- [Child Care Has Been Silently Crushing Women Farmers for Generations. That May Change Soon.](#)

EDUCATION AND NETWORKING

Whether you have been farming for three or 30 years — or are just considering farming — mentorship and community consistently emerge as the key forces that promote women farmers' resilience. The following organizations provide spaces to exchange knowledge, access expertise and celebrate unique contributions.

- The [Women, Food and Agriculture Network](#) aims to "engage women and non-binary people in building an ecological and just food and agricultural system through individual and community power." Programs focus on mentorship, conservation, advocacy and equity amongst women farmers of all races and ethnicities.
- American Farmland Trust's [Women for the Land Initiative](#) facilitates peer-to-peer learning to engage women in agriculture and connect them to resources, explores

the roadblocks women in agriculture face and advocates for policies that improve access to critical resources including capital and land.

- The [Soil Sisters](#) have distilled their years of collaborative learning into practical [toolkits](#) that equip female farmers across the country who are interested in incorporating food service on their farms, developing a local network and communicating effectively with the media.
- The [Women in Ag Learning Network](#) is dedicated to expanding educational and technical assistance programs to accommodate the growing number of female farmers and ranchers across the nation. Developed by a diverse network of land grant extension educators and agents, content focuses largely on leadership and management; business scale and profitability; land access, transfer and stewardship; legal issues; and farm safety, mechanization and ergonomics. You can locate the closest state-based program through this [map](#).
- The [National Farmers Union Women in Ag](#) is “for the women of Farmers Union to come together, share information, ask questions and inspire one another.” Hosted on Facebook as a private group, eligible women are welcome to join.
- Many land grant university Extension programs have created projects and networks in support of female farmers and ranchers. Be sure to explore [your state Extension program](#) to learn about offerings near you.
- [Annie’s Project](#), a nonprofit often offered through Extension, is dedicated to strengthening women’s roles in modern farm and ranch enterprises. Their target audience is farming women with a passion for business who want to gain a better understanding of human resource issues, business plans, financial documentation, property titles, cash and crop share leases, marketing plans, retirement and estate planning and types of insurance.
- [American National Cattlemen](#) was created to provide a voice for women beef ranchers. Most states have [affiliates](#) that address issues central their specific region.

FUNDING

Loans and grants are available through an increasingly diverse range of sources. Women farmers and ranchers, historically hindered by a lack of access to traditional funding, are gaining ground as awareness of such inequity has emerged. In addition, private and nonprofit funding sources dedicated to expanding women’s roles in agriculture continue to grow:

- Federal funding through the USDA’s [Farm Service Agency \(FSA\)](#) is a popular first step, since their loans typically offer lower interest rates for longer durations than many traditional lenders. Recent Farm Bills have incorporated provisions in the form of prioritized funding, set asides, incentives and waivers to ensure equal access to all agricultural producers, including women.
 - > This [information](#) from our partners at the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC) highlights the loans, resources and programs that comprise such efforts.

- > The USDA's [Get Started! A Guide to USDA Resources for Historically Underserved Farmers and Ranchers](#) booklet also outlines their programs in an easy-to-follow format, along with suggestions for when starting to work with the USDA.
- Farm grants dedicated to women farmers and ranchers can be found [here](#). This site is updated annually, so check back for the latest updates.
- For further funding suggestions, Farm Aid's [Farm Financing Resource Guide](#) may prove useful.

Most funders require a solid business plan as part of the application process. If that's on your to-do list, our [Farm Financing Resource Guide](#) and [Annie's Project](#) provide business planning services.

ACTIVISM

Women have a long and rich history of advocating for their rights and recognition. The field of agriculture is no exception; female farmer empowerment is accomplished through communal and political endeavors, characterized by compelling storytelling and validating one another's struggles. These organizations provide a platform for this important work:

- [American Agri-Women \(AAW\)](#) is a membership-based organization that has been advocating for agriculture since 1974. AAW has 20 affiliates and members in 42 states, dedicated to networking and promoting agriculture to the public and legislators.
- [National Women in Agriculture Association \(NWIAA\)](#) "is an agriculture outreach organization, fueled by sisterhood, need and diversity. NWIAA believes rural women, especially minority women, have been neglected; the lack of resources has stagnated rural development nationwide. NWIAA is the first minority woman-owned and operated organization that provides innovative outreach education that attracts and sustains current and future generations with its innovative, spiritual and USDA-certified education techniques."

WELLNESS

Farming is widely recognized as a uniquely stressful occupation, and community is a critical factor in mitigating the effects of farm stress — especially for women farmers.

- The [Resiliency for Women in Agriculture project](#) through the Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center offers a variety of media platforms and topics that address the stressors women often encounter. In addition, the [Women Juggling It All Resiliency Circles](#) is a monthly online gathering space where female farmers and ranchers anonymously share what's on their minds and brainstorm solutions with their peers and qualified moderators. Their [Cultivating Resiliency for Women in Agriculture podcast](#) develops tools for women in agriculture to recognize, adapt to and develop positive coping strategies for life's stresses.
- For more farm stress solutions, check out our [Farm Stress Resource Guide](#).

For those moments when you're feeling discouraged or in need of a burst of inspiration, check out these resources that celebrate women farmers!

- [The Female Farmer Project](#) is a multi-platform documentary project that chronicles the rise of women working in agriculture around the world. [Women's Work: The Untold Story of Women Farmers](#) also features farming foremothers from across America.
- [Grounded Women: Stories of Women Who Farm](#) features “powerful and committed women farmers — farmers who have chosen to create a purposeful life through sustainable agriculture.”
- The [Girls Talk Ag](#) podcast features three women deeply engaged in agriculture who tackle current topics in a no-nonsense manner.
- The [In Her Boots](#) podcast is an iconic offering from host Lisa Kivirist of MOSES (now [Marbleseed](#)). Although it is discontinued, the archive is still available to explore. She has also authored several engaging books including “[Soil Sisters: A Toolkit for Women Farmers](#).”

As savvy agribusiness operators, community builders and ecological warriors, women hold the potential to transform the face of agriculture. Farm Aid hopes these resources will sustain you along your own journey.

CONNECT WITH FARM AID

Not finding what you need? Request one-on-one assistance from our Farmer Services Team by filling out our [Online Request for Assistance form](#) or by calling **1-800-FARM-AID (1-800-327-6243)**. Farm Aid staff are happy to listen and help you in all the ways that we can.

FARMER RESOURCE GUIDES

Check out our [Farmer Resource Guides](#) for straightforward information created by our Farmer Services Team to help with topics that come up frequently on our 1-800-FARM-AID hotline.