

Hidden Actors, Muted Voices: The Employment of Rural Women in Saskatchewan Forestry and Agri-Food Industries

by

Diane Martz, Maureen Reed,
Ingrid Brueckner and Suzanne Mills

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For more information, contact:

Research Directorate

Status of Women Canada

123 Slater Street, 10th floor

Ottawa, Ontario K1P 1H9

Telephone: (613) 995-7835

Facsimile: (613) 957-3359

TDD: (613) 996-1322

ABSTRACT

In April 2003, funding by Status of Women Canada was provided to carry out a research project to understand the nature, extent and conditions of rural women's employment in forestry and agri-food industries. While women have a long history of employment in these resource sectors, surprisingly, their employment contributions and experiences have not been publicly discussed. The goal of this research was to make visible the employment experiences of rural women in these industries, particularly as rural women have fewer job opportunities than women living in cities. We describe issues faced by women working in the forestry and agri-food industries and recommend policies to enhance women's employment experiences. Over the past two years, we used multiple strategies including special data tabulations from Census Canada, interviews with 40 women from six forestry employers and 43 women from six agri-food employers, and interviews with representatives of three companies in each industry. These sources helped illustrate the opportunities and limitations of employment for women, demonstrating that rural women hold both traditional and non-traditional jobs in both industries. The findings suggest that both resource sectors offer good jobs for women that are otherwise difficult to find in rural places. Yet, women remain at the margins, often in jobs with less seniority or working with others who do not fully acknowledge their contributions. Women discussed challenges they still face related to job security, child care, shift work, opportunities for advancement, health and safety, and gender relations among co-workers and, sometimes, between workers and management. We provide recommendations for employers and policy makers to address outstanding issues.

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ACRONYMS

BSE	Bovine spongiform encephalopathy
CCPA	Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives
CORE	Commission on Resources and Environment
CQA	Canadian Quality Assurance
ILO	International Labour Organization
PPE	Personal protective equipment
TLC	Tender loving care
WHMIS	Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System

PREFACE

Good public policy depends on good policy research. In recognition of this, Status of Women Canada instituted the Policy Research Fund in 1996. It supports gender-based policy research on public policy issues in need of gender-based analysis. Our objective is to enhance public debate on gender equality issues in order to enable individuals, organizations, policy makers and policy analysts to participate more effectively in the development of equitable policy.

The focus of the research may be on long-term, emerging policy issues or short-term policy issues that require an analysis of their gender implications. Funding is awarded through an open, competitive call for proposals. A non-governmental, external committee plays a key role in identifying policy research priorities, selecting research proposals for funding and evaluating the final reports.

This policy research paper was proposed and developed under a call for proposals in September 2002, entitled Restructuring in Rural Canada: Policy Implications for Rural Women. Research projects funded by Status of Women Canada on this theme examine issues, such as the impact of long-term care patient classification systems on women employed as caregivers in rural nursing homes, rural women's experiences of maternity care in British Columbia, farm women and Canadian agricultural policy, the employment of women in Canadian forestry and agri-food industries, and the participation of rural Nova Scotia Women in the new economy.

A complete list of the research projects funded under this call for proposals is included at the end of this report.

We thank all the researchers for their contribution to the public policy debate.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The work experiences of women employed in resource sectors have largely been hidden from public discussion. Policies geared toward improving working conditions for the general work force have been developed; however, specific needs of women working in resource industries have been ignored due to the predominance of men and the assumption that men and women share the same issues. This project makes visible the employment experiences of rural women in these industries, particularly as they have fewer job opportunities than women living in cities. We reviewed the nature and extent of rural women's employment experiences in resource industries and provided recommendations focussed on women's needs.

This project used a multi-method research strategy to gain a full understanding of women's experiences in forestry and agri-food. Special data runs from Statistics Canada were used to determine the number of women employed in forestry and agri-food in different job categories across Canada and in Saskatchewan. We also conducted in-depth interviews with women employees and their employers in each sector in Saskatchewan. We completed interviews with 40 women from forestry and 43 women from agri-food, as well as with three employers from each sector.

Women explained that job opportunities in rural places were still segregated by gender. "Traditional" female employment was largely available in rural communities, yet agri-food and forestry industries offered more opportunity to obtain non-traditional work, for example, as managers and machine operators.

While opportunities may be increasing for women in forestry and agri-food, family commitments, such as caring for children and maintaining family life, continue to be a challenge. Flexibility at the workplace continues to be important for women who have to juggle day-to-day commitments, particularly for women working shift work in the forest industry. Yet, while shift work offers some forms of flexibility, it is often very difficult for those trying to maintain family life. Finding quality child care for shift workers is particularly difficult.

Health and safety were important issues for women working in agri-food. In particular, women employed at two meat processing companies described safety violations and dangerous working conditions at their workplace. While the nature of their work is hazardous, pressure by management and floor supervisors to increase productivity has severely reduced the safety of employees. Women employed in hog barns noted concerns of poor air quality due to working in a confined workplace surrounded by hog dust and gases.

Many of the women interviewed reported they enjoyed their workplace relationships. For the most part, workplace harassment is considered to be a thing of the past; however, some women in forestry and in agri-food did report instances of discrimination and sexual harassment that reduced the quality of their work situation. In most cases, the women did not

report these occurrences to their employers. Despite the absence of outright harassment, women reported challenges associated with being taken seriously and proving they were competent or equal employees to their male counterparts. This issue is arguably more challenging to address.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the findings from this research and on suggestions provided by the women who participated.

1. Industry, community organizations and government need to work collaboratively to provide viable economic opportunities for women so they can contribute a substantial income to the household.
2. Industry, workers, unions and communities are encouraged to work together to come up with creative ideas to increase child-care options available to rural families.
3. Unions, workers, companies and government are encouraged to work together to develop flexible and creative ways to provide child care for shift workers.
4. Company efforts to develop more creative recruitment strategies should be supported by provincial policy makers and unions.
5. Companies are encouraged to determine what strategies, if any, might be useful to attract and retain workers within designated equity groups (women, Aboriginal, minority and those with a disability).
6. Opportunities for flexible work and job security should be addressed through discussion and debate among workers, unions, government policy makers and companies not involved in contract bargaining.
7. The wages obtained by women in agri-food should be addressed by industry and government, particularly by employers that provide wages at the minimum level.
8. The disparity in wages between office and production workers should be reduced by unions, government and industry.
9. Any move to enforce the requirement that workers work overtime should be opposed.
10. Government should be encouraged to make improvements in labour practices for all workers, such as increasing minimum wage, ensuring protection for part-time workers and improving job security.
11. Continual monitoring and enforcement of the use of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), machine guards and other safety measures are required to control safety and health risks in the agri-food and forestry sectors.

12. Bonus premiums should be considered for meat packing plants to compensate for the increased risk of injuries, stress and health-related problems.
13. Health and safety courses should be provided on an ongoing basis on the handling of dangerous substances and to stress that working conditions are dangerous unless safety and health protocols are followed.
14. Managers at all levels must reinforce that production targets should not be achieved at the risk of personal employee safety.
15. Companies that wish to retain their productivity levels might consider how best to secure the health of their long-term employees.
16. Companies should consider providing “bursaries” for child care for women seeking to enhance their education.
17. Women with children often turn down advancement positions due to family commitments. Companies need to consider how to make management more attractive to women if they wish to have women represented in other job classifications.

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the research is to understand the nature, extent and conditions of women's employment in the forestry and agri-food industries in Saskatchewan. Governments at all levels in Canada promote the further processing of resources as a strategy in rural development; increasingly, rural women are taking up these opportunities as they seek to maintain their families in rural Canada where good-paying jobs for women are often scarce. While women do have an important role in the renewable resource sector, their contribution has largely been absent from any public discussion. The ultimate goal is to document the opportunities and experiences rural women have in these industries. Particular issues include safe and healthy (socially, psychologically and physically) workplaces, job (re)training and upgrading, and other social services that will allow women to engage in paid employment. Women working in the agri-food and forestry industries, as well as their employers, participated in the study providing information in these various areas. The goal is to provide recommendations to improve their work environments through programs, such as sensitivity training and restructuring of work days to meet women's needs.

Questions Addressed

Our research addresses the following specific questions.

Positions of Women in Resource Industries

- What positions do women hold within the formal employment structures of forestry and the agri-food industry?
- Are there differences in the employment positions of women among women living in different parts of Canada?

Women's Employment Experiences

- What employment opportunities are available or are emerging for rural women in these industries?
- What barriers do rural women face in attaining, retaining and becoming promoted in quality jobs in the agri-food and forestry industries?
- Why do women leave employment in these industries?

Policy Implications

- What experiences documented above are unique to each resource sector and what ones are shared? How can these similarities and differences be explained?
- What existing or new policies and programs can be used or created by the private and public sectors to encourage the availability of quality employment opportunities, particularly for rural women?

- What existing or new policies and programs (employment or other social policies) can be used or created by the private and public sectors to encourage rural women to attain, retain or become promoted in employment in these resource sectors?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Rationale for Studying Rural Women's Employment

Women have long worked in resource industries including fishing, forestry, mining, agriculture and tourism (Sachs 1997). Yet, surprisingly, their employment contributions to these industries have been largely absent from public discussion. While there has been a great deal of research attention given to “redefining women’s work” to include their paid and unpaid work contributions to households, businesses, communities and so on (e.g., Waring 1988), relatively less attention has been paid to documenting women’s employment experiences in rural contexts. Consequently, the work of rural women is largely hidden and our understanding of their employment experiences remains muted.

This gap in the basic understanding of the structure of women’s employment is made larger by economic globalization and the consequent restructuring of resource industries, rural economies and rural communities. While we know that the loss of social services and depopulation of many rural areas across Canada affects male and female workers differently (Leach 1999), the gap in our understanding of these effects persists. Unfortunately, research to date has not adequately addressed restructuring from a gender-based perspective. For example, when Egan and Klausen (1998) surveyed research that addressed gender and the restructuring of British Columbia’s forest industry, they found a paucity of research focussed on these issues. They noted that while some investigations used a gender-sensitive approach (e.g., MacKenzie 1987; Grass 1987; Grass and Hayter 1989; Stanton 1989; Hayter and Barnes 1992; Hay 1993),

the bulk of recent research...neglects gender as a central category of analysis (e.g., Drushka 1985; Ettlinger 1990; Hayter et al. 1993; Drushka et al. 1993; Barnes and Hayter 1994; Hayter and Barnes 1997),...and overlooks the marginalised position of women in the paid labour force and forest-sector unions and, moreover, ignores the broader issue of the sexual division of paid and unpaid labour in forest-dependent communities (Egan and Klausen 1998: 9).

In Canada, Leach’s work stands out for its attempt to address the differential effects of restructuring on the lives of rural women and men (e.g., Leach 1999). Nevertheless, her research remains focussed on the experience of rural dwellers in southern Ontario and does not speak to workers’ experiences in primary resource industries.

Despite this gap in research and understanding, policies about employment continue to be developed without considering the different needs of the labour force by gender, location in the employment structure and location within rural systems across the country. Consequently, opportunities for, and barriers to, women’s attainment and retention in resource jobs and their experiences of employment have not been systematically addressed from a policy perspective.

In this context, the purpose of this report is twofold. First, it provides visibility to rural women's work, by documenting the kinds of jobs women hold in agri-food and forestry industries in Canada broadly, and in Saskatchewan more specifically. Second, it discusses the experiences of Saskatchewan women working in two resource sectors — forestry and the agri-food industry — to inform policy recommendations related to employment and rural conditions.

Finding Women in Rural Jobs

It is difficult to obtain accurate, reliable, valid, current, complete and commensurable data on gender and employment in resource sectors, such as forestry, agriculture, fishing and mining, as these data are not readily available from government agencies or private companies (Wright 2001). Employment counts by resource sector, location and gender in combination are not routinely made available by Statistics Canada, other government agencies, researchers or industrial employers. Company records typically do not distinguish between women in non-traditional jobs (e.g., planers) and women employed in traditional jobs (e.g., secretaries) within firms.

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that rural and resource industries in Canada have been male dominated, creating, in many cases a *workingman's* culture (Dunk 1991). Census data reveal that women are employed in very small numbers in resource industries. For example, the 2001 Census of Canada reported that just about two percent of women in the paid work force were employed in occupations unique to primary industries, representing less than one percent of the total work force in Canada. This figure compares with five percent of men in the paid work force employed in occupations unique to primary industries, representing three percent of the total work force in the country.

Given these data, it is tempting to say that the problem is not sufficiently large to warrant any special attention. Yet, researchers working across several resource sectors have found that census definitions typically do not capture the extent and nature of workers' participation in renewable resource sectors (e.g., Brandth and Haugen 1998; Sachs 1996; Wright 2001). The definitions of basic categories, such as "occupations unique to primary industries" do not capture the range of jobs typically included in a resource industry. Additional census tabulations that break down basic categories reveal a larger range of job categories and, consequently, provide larger numbers of women and men employed in resource industries. These special tabulations tend to be expensive and frequently are not used. Thus, researchers who rely solely on published census data tend to underestimate the number of women (and men) who work in resource occupations (for discussion, see Reed 2003b). These limitations point to the need to consider census data with some qualifications and to supplement the data with other sources to understand the range of possible jobs for women and their work experiences.

The Structure of Job Opportunities for Rural Women

According to a broad literature that addresses rural and resource communities, traditional conceptions of femininity and masculinity are strong in rural resource communities where

women are seen as the primary caregivers and nurturers, and men as the providers and decision makers (Gibson 1992; Little 2002). These conceptions are reinforced by a dominant ideology that locates women's "rightful" place to be the home and contributes to a relative lack of employment prospects for women outside the home. The impacts of geographic and social isolation, lack of employment opportunities, financial and emotional dependence on spouses, company domination of social life, dominant ideology and limited social services have generally been viewed as limiting women's opportunities to take up paid employment in rural resource communities (Cloke and Little 1990; Gibson 1992; Little 1987; Marchak 1983; Seitz 1995; Warren 1992).

Additionally, employers in resource sectors have taken advantage of these traditional ideologies (women as the primary caregivers and men as the main breadwinners) to encourage men to undertake shift work and women to stay at home and care for the family (Luxton and Corman 2001). Economic restructuring of resource industries has recently encouraged rural women to find employment to support the family and household. Women in forestry and mining often point out that economic necessity is a major reason for finding paid employment, particularly when men's jobs are threatened either from industry-wide layoffs or because of strike action (Luxton and Corman 2001). In agriculture, restructuring, unstable farm prices and rising input prices resulted in farm families seeking diversified sources of income to supplement the farm and household income (Martz and Brueckner 2003; Martz 2004). Since many farm families can no longer depend on the farm as a primary source of income, farm women increasingly work off the farm to support both the family and farm operation (Sachs 1996; USDA 2002; Ahearn and Lee 1991).

But women are not just forced to work because of family economic imperatives. Women want to work and they seek recognition for their efforts. For example, women living in small towns on northern Vancouver Island in the 1990s had higher rates of participation in the work force than women in the province overall. Nevertheless, women on northern Vancouver Island were more highly represented in part-time employment and they received lower wages than the average for women in the province (Reed 2003b).

Beyond ideological constraints, there are practical limitations to women's employment opportunities in rural areas. When seeking employment, rural women are confined by the limited opportunities available to them in their communities, particularly highly skilled jobs that pay well. Often, the only job options available to rural women are menial, unskilled, low-paying, part-time jobs, such as working in convenience stores, shopping centres, housekeeping or minor clerical work. Jobs in resource industries are often highly desirable. Female waged employment is scarce in male-dominated positions in mining, forestry and fishing as these jobs are seen to be physically demanding, dangerous and dirty (Gibson 1992; Fink 1998; Sachs 1997). An exception to this observation occurs in the food-processing sector where women work in high numbers. In this sector, the work is characterized by high transition rates and poor wages, and jobs are flexible, dangerous, repetitive and unskilled (MacLachlan 2001; Griffith et al. 1995).

Their commitment to home responsibilities, particularly child care and, increasingly, elder care also shapes women's employment choices. Women may seek part-time or flexible work

to meet their care commitments and will re-organize their paid employment, if family needs or emergencies arise (Little 2002; Luxton and Corman 2001). These commitments place rural women at a particular disadvantage compared to urban women, as rural communities have very limited — if any — child- and elder-care services available. Shift work schedules have a strong impact on both partners, requiring additional juggling particularly if there are other family members requiring care (Luxton and Corman 2001). These commitments clearly affect the options available to women, as they may seek employment that will provide them with the flexibility to meet family needs.

Workplace Conditions in the Agri-Food and Forestry Industries

In contrast to a large body of labour theory to explain industrial and urban situations, there is a paucity of theory that explains gendered labour practices in rural places and resource sectors, particularly outside of agriculture (Halseth 1999). Resource industries have a long history of marked job segregation and exclusion of women from certain job classifications. Job segregation — the strong association of women or men with particular kinds of employment — remains strong even today.

Labour segmentation theory advanced by Doeringer and Piore (1971) divides the labour market into two sectors. Jobs in the internal (primary) segment are characterized by “high wages, good working conditions, employment stability, chances of advancement, equity, and due process in the administration of work rules” while the external (secondary) segment contains jobs with “low wages and fringe benefits, poor conditions, high labour turnover, little chance of advancement, and often arbitrary and capricious supervision” (Doeringer and Piore 1971: 165). Furthermore, the secondary sector is more likely to be composed of workers who are female, belong to a visible minority, and are not part of a union. Hanson and Pratt (1995: 6) suggested that women’s exclusions from the internal segment are built “on the sexist practices of male employers and employees” where “unions and professional organizations [organize] to shelter jobs for themselves.”

Rural women in all resource industries are less likely to have positions in professional or managerial positions, and few have opportunities to move into these positions (Hayter 2000). If women in rural communities want these positions, they often relocate to larger centres where more options are available to them. Instead, women in resource communities may settle for part-time, temporary and casual work. These jobs are not only low paying, but also lack benefits, holiday pay and sick leave, and provide little opportunity for promotion (Little 2002).

Women work in primary agriculture for wages as hired labour. However, the majority of women in primary agriculture work as family labour for non-monetary benefits. Until 1991, when Statistics Canada allowed more than one operator to be identified on Canadian farms, much of this work was invisible. In a recent study of Canadian farm women (Martz and Brueckner 2003), women worked an average of 3.5 hours each day at farm work, most often in livestock work, record keeping and accounting, driving trucks and supervising farm labour. Men have traditionally worked at operating large machinery. However, at harvest, or other times when extra help is needed on the farm, the gendered differences between women

and men's work becomes less apparent and women often take on duties primarily seen as masculine.

Bryant and Perkins (1982) found women employed in agricultural processing industries in the United States made up the majority of the labour force and noted that their work was highly gender segregated. In the meat packing industries, men and women have very different jobs and different pay scales (Fink 1998). Women are typically involved in the low-paying and unskilled end of the production process, such as meat preparation, labelling and packaging of meat (MacLachlan 2001; Griffith et al. 1995). The more physically and mentally arduous work, such as the kill line and the de-boning of meat, is predominantly done by the strongest and most experienced men. These jobs, as opposed to the packing jobs, are also the higher paying jobs, in which few women have the opportunity to be involved (MacLachlan 2001).

Tomoda (2000) consistently documented the wage differential between men and women in the meat processing sector in a number of countries, due to differences in work hours, division of labour and gender. The differences in wages and jobs between men and women in the meat packing plants can be attributed to the de-skilling of food production through mechanization and assembly line techniques. The meat packing industry was at one time a male-dominated industry, but this is rapidly changing as the industry restructures. With the introduction of the assembly line, meat packing plants were able to increase their production rates, lower their wage labour and increase their profits. To ensure low wage rates, meat packing plants in the United States targeted vulnerable populations, particularly single women and migrant labourers willing to take on part-time, low-waged labour to support their families (Broadway 1999; MacLachlan 2001; Stull and Broadway 1995).

In forestry-related jobs, women are considered to be marginal actors in extraction and processing sectors, but hold the lion's share of office-related employment (secretarial and administrative support) (Grass and Hayter 1989; Hayter 2000). Increasingly, office jobs are not only secretarial and administrative (e.g., personnel), but also involve planning, regulation and enforcement, mapping, public education and consultancy. There is some evidence that women may be moving into these positions, but the opportunities in rural places may be quite small (see Reed 2003b; Egan and Klausen 1998; Brandth and Haugen 2000).

Once employment is obtained, women in resource extraction and processing occupations face a great deal of resistance, particularly by men who feel threatened by the presence of women working and competing for those positions (Tallichet 2000). Reskin and Padavic (1988) argued that women may retain these jobs where "men will tolerate women in predominantly male work settings if they work in 'women's' jobs..., but resist women doing traditionally male jobs in traditionally male work settings" (Reskin and Padavic 1988 cited by Tallichet, 2000: 235). As this observation was made some time ago, it is not clear if resistance is still as strong today. Women who do apply for positions considered outside of the natural confines of female employment may face outright exclusion from work opportunities or they may experience sexism, harassment and marginalization in their work

environments (Egan and Klausen 1998; Reed 2003a). These issues require further exploration to determine the challenges women face in the work environment.

Health and safety issues are also important for rural women workers and the communities in which they live. Recent research on the community impact of agricultural processing industries notes the increasing disruption of newcomers, the strain on housing and public facilities, the challenges of child care and shift work and divisions in the communities around environmental concerns (Broadway 2001, 1999; Daila et al. 2002). Research about the impacts of work on the employees of the agri-food sector highlights the poor quality of jobs (Qualman 2001), meaning that they are characterized by low wages, poor health conditions, poor worker relationships and high injury rates (Broadway 1999; Ansley 1999; Galston and Baehler 1995).

These issues are highlighted in research focussing on the meat packing industry. Workers' health and safety have been frequently described as having a lower priority for meat processing companies than maintaining high production rates. Repetitive movements (carpal tunnel syndrome), cold and wet working conditions, sharp objects, moving machines and animal carcasses make jobs in the meat processing industry extremely dangerous (Stull et al. 1995; MacLachlan 2001). Although women make up a significant proportion of the labour force in the food processing sector, most analyses have focused on the entire labour force instead of the specific experiences of women (Fink 1998).

The poultry industry has undergone more extensive restructuring than other meat processing industries, and is now predominantly mechanized with the exception of de-boning carcasses. With increased mechanization, there is an expectation to increase the speed of production. Due to this pressure, employees experience higher levels of work-related stress and workplace injuries to keep up with increased speeds on assembly line production. Assembly line production also gives corporations the ability to control the pace of production. Tomoda (2000) noted that in Canada, the increased speed of an assembly line forced employees using knives to perform their tasks in nine to ten seconds. Not only were higher injuries a result, but poor employee relationships occurred as workers accused one another of working too slow.

Studies of the hog industry largely focussed on the impact that intensive livestock operations have on the environment and rural communities (e.g., Genders 2000; Ketilson 2002). Studies completed in the United States documented similar issues in communities with intensive hog operations as in communities with meat processing plants including increased community mobility, low-waged employment, health and social problems, and strains on infrastructure and social services (CCPA 2000; Genders 2000). Additional documented issues include communities divided by opposing ideas, reduced quality of life (due to the smell), increased health risks (water and soil contamination) and the displacement of small-scale hog farmers (CCPA 2000; Genders 2000). However, literature on the working conditions in hog production is limited with no documentation of the Canadian experience.

There has been some focus on the health impacts of farmers and employees working in confined hog operations (Hurley et al. 2000; CCPA 2000). Confined hog operations containing 25,000 hogs can "produce as much effluent as a city with 50,000 people"

(Hurley et al. 2000: 323). These conditions increase the risk of exposure to harmful gases, such as ammonia and hydrogen sulphide. Studies have also found some evidence of reduced pulmonary function in farmers (Hurley et al. 2000) and in animals (Bongers et al. 1987). Individuals are also exposed to “hog dust” that contains particles from animals, feeds and manure. These toxins in the atmosphere cause chronic respiratory illnesses, such as asthma, chronic bronchitis, cough and phlegm and cold and flu symptoms (Hurley et al. 2000). Other health concerns include reduced hand strength due to repetitive motion and increased hearing impairment. Currently, research by the Institute for Agricultural Rural and Environmental Health (IAREH) in Saskatchewan is determining the level of pulmonary risk for employees in hog operations.¹

Health and safety issues are also important in forestry occupations, particularly in “practical” forestry work that requires physical strength and endurance (e.g., scaling, production lines). The physical work and the chemicals used have been documented as health concerns by women working in the industry in British Columbia (Reed 2003b). Long-standing government regulation of the industry, unionization and competition among firms, have helped to develop a commitment to maintaining health and safety standards. Yet, the extent to which these commitments are met and whether they meet women’s concerns has yet to be explored.

Female forest workers are also underrepresented in worker unions, and those who are in unions face barriers to participation (Egan and Klausen 1998; Reed 2003a). Furthermore, women are more vulnerable to the tactics of forest management companies and unions, because they typically have lower seniority arising from the history of their exclusion from many of the jobs in forest processing. As a result, during times of difficulty in the industry, when people are laid off or lose their jobs entirely, women’s jobs more often than men’s jobs are affected (Grass and Hayter 1989; Egan and Klausen 1998; Reed 2003a).

Other Working Conditions and Challenges

Despite official government and company policies to hire and retain workers and to maintain safe and healthy work environments, women may confront more subtle challenges to their employment in resource industries. Work in B.C. forestry suggests that women were consistently confronted with the concern that they were inadequately suited to work in forestry. This affected the perceptions men had of women’s duties while on the job (e.g., where only female professional foresters were required to make the coffee and clean up after meetings), the opportunities for promotion (where women were passed over) and, ultimately, to the size of the pay cheque they brought home each month. Once in jobs, women believed they needed to prove themselves constantly. Women who had been employed for more than 20 years still believed they had to prove their worth; women who had been employed for only two years believed they never would be able to do so. Instead, many women stated that recognition of their abilities on the job would require a new generation of managers to replace the “dinosaurs”² currently in positions of prestige and power (Reed 2003a). These concerns suggest a need to investigate the extent to which official policies and contemporary societal and family pressures intersect to generate

favourable or unfavourable conditions and experiences of work for rural women in resource industries.

Gender and Policy

The establishment of gender-sensitive policies to address the differential needs of male and female workers has eluded policy makers. Gender-based analysis would consider all phases of employment — recruitment, retention, working conditions and relations, as well as adjustment strategies in the face of job loss. Few, if any, policies target differential needs of women and men in these categories. Most policies and programs in resource sectors have been aimed at the average worker, which has typically assumed a male who is either single or who is the primary breadwinner. This assumption has led to policies and programs that have discriminatory effects.

For example, most policies and programs developed to address economic downturns have focussed on retaining, retraining or offering retirement packages that typically favour the male wage earner, even when it is known that labour adjustment will be more difficult for women than for men. For example, in British Columbia, a government commission acknowledged that female job losses were more rapid than men's and the disproportionate stress associated with economic dislocation would be felt by women (CORE 1994a). Additionally, this commission cited a government study in Ontario that acknowledged that "women, in fact, take a greater cut in pay compared with men when they are displaced... they experience significantly more long-term unemployment and earn less when they do land a job. Because of this, there is justification for special efforts to ensure that women have full access to labour adjustment services" (Ontario Ministry of Labour nd: 75-76 cited by CORE 1994a). Yet, these findings never formed part of the transition strategies and no adjustment programs specifically targeted women.

Instead, retraining and retirement packages were tied into employment insurance and seniority structures. In theory, these were available to all workers regardless of gender. In practice, the structure of the industry, union seniority rules, employment insurance regulations and other issues of accessibility (e.g., lack of transportation and child-care facilities) favoured male workers.

In sum, women's work in forestry and in some areas of the agri-food industry has been mainly unexamined by researchers and policy practitioners (Egan and Klassen 1998; Brandth and Haugen 1998; Porter 1985; Wright 2001; Sachs 1996). Women's employment (whether on the "main stage" of resource sector jobs or in "supporting roles") is viewed as secondary and policies that might encourage their employment or assist them when they become unemployed have not been formulated. There is a need to understand how women work in rural areas and what policies might assist them to seek and retain well-paid and secure employment. There remains a need to develop a gender-based analysis that can highlight the differential experiences and needs of women living in rural areas and working in resource sectors, and connect these needs to policy recommendations to enhance women's prospects for and experiences of employment.

3. METHODS AND STUDY PARAMETERS

Research Methods

This research used a mixed-method, multi-scaled approach including an analysis of census data, qualitative interviews with women employed in forestry and agri-food, and qualitative interviews with the employers of women interviewed. The research compares experiences in the forestry and agri-food sectors, realizing that some of the issues facing both industries are unique. While we focussed on obtaining qualitative data, quantitative data were also collected to help identify patterns. The qualitative data helped explain the “how” and “why” behind the patterns.

The research protocol was approved by the Research Ethics Board of the University of Saskatchewan before interviews were undertaken. This protocol requires researchers to inform all participants about the funding, purpose and any associated risks of the study prior to securing their agreement to participate. Participants are told that they may choose not to answer any question or they may halt the interview at any time without penalty. Additionally, they may ask that their interview be withdrawn from the study; however, no one did. All participants were given a \$50 honorarium for their participation. This was granted regardless of whether the participants answered all the questions.

This study was considered a “low risk” study by the Research Ethics Board, because no deception strategies were used. Additionally, participants were guaranteed confidentiality. Employers, civil servants or other potentially interested parties did not, and will not, have access to the raw data. Only the researchers directly involved in the study were given access to the interview transcripts and all others gained access to this information either as anonymous quotations or in an aggregated form. No names were used in the report. Finally, the data are retained in a locked cabinet in the offices of one of the principal investigators.

Data Collection and Sample

Secondary data from Census Canada were analyzed to determine the geographic distribution of agriculture and forestry industries across Canada and Saskatchewan. Special data runs were also purchased from Statistics Canada on demographic and occupational characteristics of women working in these industries. For the purposes of the qualitative interviews, “rural” was defined as all locations outside the major centres of Saskatoon and Regina.

Qualitative data were collected from in-depth interviews with women employed in the forestry and agri-food sectors as well as the employers of the women interviewed. Women were recruited directly from rural employers in both industries. We approached the human resources department of each company and asked it to distribute a letter to all its female employees. The letter described the purpose of the project, outlined the rights of the interviewees and provided contact information. All the companies approached in agri-food agreed to help us in our recruitment efforts. Companies in forestry were less willing to

assist; two companies refused to participate. As a result, other methods were used to recruit women, such as advertisements in the local newspaper, posters at post offices and word of mouth. Women who left the industries were recruited by referral from the women who agreed to participate in the interview. Questions focussed on opportunities available to women in rural communities and within the forestry and agri-food industries, challenges in obtaining/retaining work, worker health and safety, presence of harassment and advancement and training opportunities (appendixes A and B).

In the agricultural industry, 21 women from the hog industry, 13 from the meat processing sector and nine women who left either the hog or the meat processing industries participated. We had greater success in locating women in the hog sector, as it is a rapidly growing industry in rural Saskatchewan. It was more challenging to locate women in the meat processing sector, because few of these companies are located in rural communities. Furthermore, the largest meat processing firm started strike action at the start of our recruitment efforts, and the strike was not resolved until the end of recruitment. As a result, many women were unwilling to participate due to concerns of job security.

In the forestry processing sector, 40 women participated including 18 women employed in wood processing industries, nine employed in pulp and paper, one government employee, six employed in primary forestry and six women who had exited forestry. The higher number of women interviewed in the wood processing industries reflects the larger number of wood processing companies in Saskatchewan as opposed to pulp and paper mills. Women who left the forestry industry were also more difficult to locate than women who had left the agriculture industries, likely due to the fact that few had left, because of the better wages and benefits in forestry compared to the agri-food industries.

As the final phase of data collection, in-depth interviews took place with the employers of women who had participated in the study. Three employers in forestry and three employers in agri-food participated. Questions asked of the employers focussed on recruitment, training, absenteeism, loss, work-management relations and global/regional/local issues affecting the company and employment (Appendix C). The majority of the questions examined how women, men, Aboriginal employees, visible minorities and those with a disability differed for each of the above areas. Employers were also asked if they could provide policy documents they had prepared for health, safety and harassment issues.

Population

In the agri-food sector, women were targeted from three employers from the hog industry and three employers from the meat processing sector. In the forestry sector, women were recruited from two employers in the pulp and paper sector, three employers from the wood processing industries and one employer from a primary forestry company. The companies ranged from small family-owned businesses to large multinational companies.

Eighty-six percent of women in the agri-food industry were full-time employees. Of those employees in the agri-food industry, all the women employed in the hog sector were

employed full time while 91 percent of women in meat processing were part time and nine percent were full time. All the women in the forestry sector were full-time employees.

The average age of women interviewed in the agri-food sector was 37, and the average age of women interviewed in the forestry industry was 40. The majority of women in both the agri-food and forestry industries were married or had a partner, where 74 percent of women in agri-food and 70 percent of women in forestry stated they had a spouse/partner. Forty percent of women in agri-food and 43 percent of women in forestry indicated they had young children to care for at home.

The highest level of education acquired by the majority of women interviewed from the agri-food industry was a technical certificate (35 percent) or Grade 12 (32 percent). Fourteen percent of women had less than their Grade 12, 12 percent had some university, five percent had completed their bachelor's degree and two percent did not finish their technical/college certificate. Women in forestry were, on average, more educated than women in agri-food. Twenty-five percent of women in forestry who were interviewed had a university degree, 35 percent had a technical/college certificate, six percent had some technical/college training and 15 percent had completed Grade 12.

As can be seen by Table 1, the study population focussed on women working in non-traditional jobs in the agri-food and forestry sectors. The majority of women interviewed in the agri-food sector were labourers, followed by administration occupations (clerical, secretarial and administrative), managers/supervisors and technical and trades. Compared to the Statistics Canada data, our population includes a higher proportion of women working as labourers and an underrepresentation of women working in business, finance and administrative positions. In forestry, women employed as labourers also had the highest representation, followed by professionals, administration and managers/supervisors. In forestry, we have a higher than average percentage of women working in the trades and as labourers, and a much lower than average percentage of women working in administrative positions.

Occupations	Agriculture Interviews		Forestry Interviews		Agriculture Census Data		Forestry Census Data	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Managers/supervisors	4	9.0	3	7.5	32	1.0	95	8.2
Technical and trade	1	2.0	0	0.0	2,695	77.3	635	55.0
Administration	7	16.0	4	10.0	45	1.3	45	3.9
Professional	0	0.0	6	15.0	245	7.0	145	12.6
Labourers	31	72.0	27	67.5	465	13.3	235	20.3
Total	43	100	40	100.00	3,485	100	1,155	100

Sources: Statistics Canada 2001; forestry and agri-food interviews (2004).

Data Analysis

The demographic information from the women interviewed was coded into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Atlas/TI was used in the coding and analysis of the qualitative interviews. The qualitative interviews were coded based on a predefined set of themes derived from the literature and research questions. However, additional themes which emerged during coding were also pulled out of the data. The major themes include:

- how women arranged for work;
- how women found their work;
- opportunities in the community;
- challenges to find work;
- barriers in retaining work;
- health and safety in the workplace;
- policies in the workplace;
- worker relationships;
- training/education at work;
- advancement opportunities;
- challenges in staying; and
- family life.

More refined themes were developed within each sub-theme to understand fully the employment experiences of women in both the agri-food and forestry industries.

4. MAKING VISIBLE/COUNTING WOMEN IN: RURAL WOMEN IN THE AGRI-FOOD AND FORESTRY INDUSTRIES

Geographical Location of Labour in the Agriculture and Forestry Sectors

Although this study focusses on women working in Saskatchewan, it is useful to look at where Saskatchewan is positioned with respect to agricultural and forestry workers in other Canadian provinces. Ontario had the highest number of people employed in primary agriculture production (Table 2) in Canada, accounting for 25.5 percent of the people employed. Ontario has the largest number of farms in Canada and also has a high proportion of farms that specialize in fruit, vegetable and greenhouse production, which tend to be more labour intensive. Alberta and Saskatchewan also have significant numbers of farms, and Alberta was the second largest employer in agriculture production (18 percent of the Canadian total). Saskatchewan follows Quebec, accounting for 16 percent of the Canadian total. Although Saskatchewan has more farms than Quebec, the types of agriculture in Quebec also tend to be more labour intensive than the grain and cattle production that dominates in Saskatchewan. The Maritimes and the Territories accounted for a very small proportion of people employed in agriculture production.

	Primary Agriculture Industries¹	Agriculture Manufacturing²	Primary Forestry Industries³	Forestry Manufacturing⁴
Province	%	%	%	%
British Columbia	9.53	8.15	34.17	26.09
Alberta	18.44	9.62	5.58	6.39
Saskatchewan	15.97	2.72	2.02	1.52
Manitoba	8.37	4.22	1.60	2.28
Ontario	25.45	39.54	12.25	21.46
Quebec	16.48	28.64	28.72	32.33
New Brunswick	1.99	2.85	8.10	5.78
Nova Scotia	2.12	2.44	4.55	2.50
Prince Edward Island	1.17	1.03	0.39	0.13
Newfoundland and Labrador	0.48	0.75	2.24	1.47
Yukon	0.02	0.00	0.18	0.05
Northwest Territories	0.01	0.01	0.21	0.00
Nunavut	0.00	0.02	0.01	0.00
Canada	100	100	100	100

Notes:

¹ This group of industries includes people working on farms and in support activities for farms.

² This group of industries includes food manufacturing, meat processing, milling, bakeries and other food manufacturing.

³ This group of industries includes timber tract operations, forest nurseries and gathering of forest products, and logging activities.

⁴ This group of industries includes sawmills and wood preservation, veneer, plywood and engineered work products, and pulp, paper and paperboard manufacturing.

Source: Statistics Canada (2001).

Primary agriculture in Canada is undergoing significant change. Farms are becoming larger and fewer with many farms unable to support fully a farm family. Between 1981 and 2001, the number of farms in Canada declined by 29 percent, with the most rapid decline from 1996 to 2001. Farm families also work at non-farm employment in greater numbers as farm incomes contribute, on average, only 17 percent of farm family incomes (Statistics Canada 2001). As a result, jobs in rural regions have become increasingly important for ensuring farm families are able to remain in rural areas. Primary agriculture is also changing in many ways, from increasing diversity in the crops grown and livestock in particular regions to major changes in the form of production. One change reflected in this paper is the intensification of hog production into large integrated facilities, which have become an important employer in some rural regions.

In agricultural manufacturing, Ontario accounted for 40 percent of employment, followed by Quebec with 29 percent. No other province in Canada rivalled Ontario or Quebec. Alberta accounted for 10 percent of the Canadian population employed in agricultural manufacturing, followed by British Columbia with eight percent. Saskatchewan ranked in seventh place, accounting for only three percent of people employed in agricultural manufacturing industries. Although Saskatchewan was a significant contributor to primary agriculture production in Canada, it was much less significant in agriculture manufacturing industries. The Government of Saskatchewan is attempting to increase agricultural manufacturing through its support of value added activities in agriculture.

Although Saskatchewan has had a forest industry for more than a century, it is only in recent years that the industry has been identified as an area of significant investment and growth. Rural restructuring has, among other things, meant emphasizing the non-agricultural sectors operating in the rural economy. Forestry has historically provided jobs for communities north of the agricultural belt. With expanding Aboriginal populations in central and northern Saskatchewan, the forest sector is seen as an important avenue for job creation. However, within Canada, the Saskatchewan forest industry is still relatively small. In primary forest production, British Columbia accounted for 34 percent of the Canadian labour force in forestry. Quebec was the second largest employer in forestry production, followed by Ontario, New Brunswick and Alberta. Saskatchewan ranked eighth in primary forest production in Canada and had much smaller proportions of employment in primary forestry than in primary agriculture.

In forestry manufacturing industries, Quebec had the highest proportion of people working, followed by British Columbia and Ontario. Other provinces with a large proportion of people employed in forestry industries were Alberta and New Brunswick. The remaining provinces were less significant in forestry manufacturing, with Saskatchewan again ranking eighth.

Women in the Forestry and Agriculture Labour Force

The proportion of females and males in primary and secondary forestry and agriculture industries is presented in Table 3. Women were better represented in agriculture industries than in the forestry industries at both the provincial and national levels. Women accounted

for 34.9 percent of the primary agriculture labour force and 39.8 percent of the agriculture manufacturing labour force in Canada. Women had a much lower representation in forestry industries, accounting for only 15.2 percent of the workers in primary forestry industries, and 14.2 percent in the forestry manufacturing industries.

Women in Alberta were better represented in primary forestry industries than in all other provinces, where they accounted for 22 percent of the primary forestry labour force. Ontario had the second highest percent of women employed in primary forestry industries followed by Saskatchewan and British Columbia.

In forestry manufacturing industries, Manitoba had the highest percent of women employed, accounting for 20 percent of its labour force in forestry manufacturing. Saskatchewan was second in the country, where 18 percent of the forestry manufacturing labour force was female. Saskatchewan was followed closely by Ontario and Alberta.

The percentage of women in the primary agriculture and agricultural manufacturing industries was fairly equal across the provinces. It was interesting to note that the Northwest Territories leads the rest of Canada, with women making up 60 percent of the primary agriculture labour force. However, this is a result of the small numbers being representative of the population. British Columbia, Yukon and Nova Scotia had a higher proportion of females employed in the primary agriculture industries than other provinces. Despite the importance of agriculture in Saskatchewan, it had the third lowest proportion of women employed in primary agriculture industries. However it is important to note that many women working in primary agriculture are never counted in official statistics (Martz and Brueckner 2003).

Province	Primary Agriculture Industries		Agriculture Manufacturing		Primary Forestry Industries		Forestry Manufacturing	
	% F	% M	% F	% M	% F	% M	% F	% M
British Columbia	43.7	56.3	43.2	56.8	16.9	83.1	11.7	88.3
Alberta	35.8	64.2	36.1	63.9	22.4	77.6	16.4	83.6
Sask.	30.2	69.8	27.9	72.1	17.3	82.7	17.8	82.2
Manitoba	32.0	68.0	36.3	63.7	13.1	86.9	19.9	80.1
Ontario	36.8	63.2	43.9	56.1	18.0	82.0	17.5	82.5
Quebec	32.6	67.4	36.9	63.1	13.2	86.8	13.8	86.2
New Brunswick	29.7	70.3	36.3	63.7	11.2	88.8	13.9	86.1
Nova Scotia	36.7	63.3	36.9	63.1	10.3	89.7	11.1	88.9
Prince Edward Island	27.4	72.6	32.1	67.9	7.1	92.9	13.6	86.4
Newfoundland and Labrador	32.4	67.6	38.2	61.8	9.8	90.2	6.4	93.6
Northwest Territories	60.0	40.0	40.0	60.0	15.9	84.1	0	0
Yukon	36.8	63.2	0	0	10.5	89.5	0	100
Canada	34.9	65.1	39.8	60.2	15.2	84.8	14.2	85.8

Source: Statistics Canada (2001).

Ontario and British Columbia had the highest percentage of females employed in their agricultural manufacturing industries. This was followed by Quebec, New Brunswick, Manitoba and Alberta. Compared to all other provinces and territories (with the exception of Yukon and Nunavut), Saskatchewan had the lowest percentage of women in agriculture manufacturing industries.

The vast majority of women employed in the forestry and agriculture industries in Saskatchewan, in 2001, were either farm operators or labourers, accounting for 22,930 women in the labour force. There were more women working in primary agriculture than in agricultural manufacturing or the forest industries. However, women were better represented in agricultural manufacturing industries than in the forestry manufacturing industries in Saskatchewan.

Women employed in primary agriculture and forestry predominantly lived in rural areas while women employed in the manufacturing industries most commonly lived in urban centres in Saskatchewan. This is not surprising, as rural communities rely on primary production industries for employment, whereas urban centres are more diversified with the secondary and tertiary industries. For example, in Saskatchewan, Saskatoon is home to Mitchell's Gourmet Meats and Prince Albert is home to Weyerhaeuser Canada Ltd.³

As shown in Table 4, women in the primary agriculture industry were equally distributed across the majority of Saskatchewan's census divisions with the exception of Census Division 18, which includes most of Northern Saskatchewan. The largest number of women employed in the primary agriculture industry is in Census Division 11, with 2,225 women. Census Division 11 includes the city of Saskatoon and its surrounding agricultural land which incorporates a number of nurseries, greenhouses and u-pick operations — agricultural operations that more often include women. Agricultural manufacturing is also concentrated in Saskatoon, as well as in census divisions 10 (Wynyard), 6 (Regina) and 9 (Yorkton).

Census Division 15, which includes the City of Prince Albert, was home to the largest groups of women employed in both primary forestry industries and forestry manufacturing in 2001. Census divisions 16 (Big River) and 18 (northern Saskatchewan) had the second highest number of women employed in primary forestry industries. The majority of females employed in forestry manufacturing were located in census division 15 (Prince Albert), followed by 14 (Hudson Bay) and 11 (Saskatoon). (See Figure 1.)

Women's Occupations

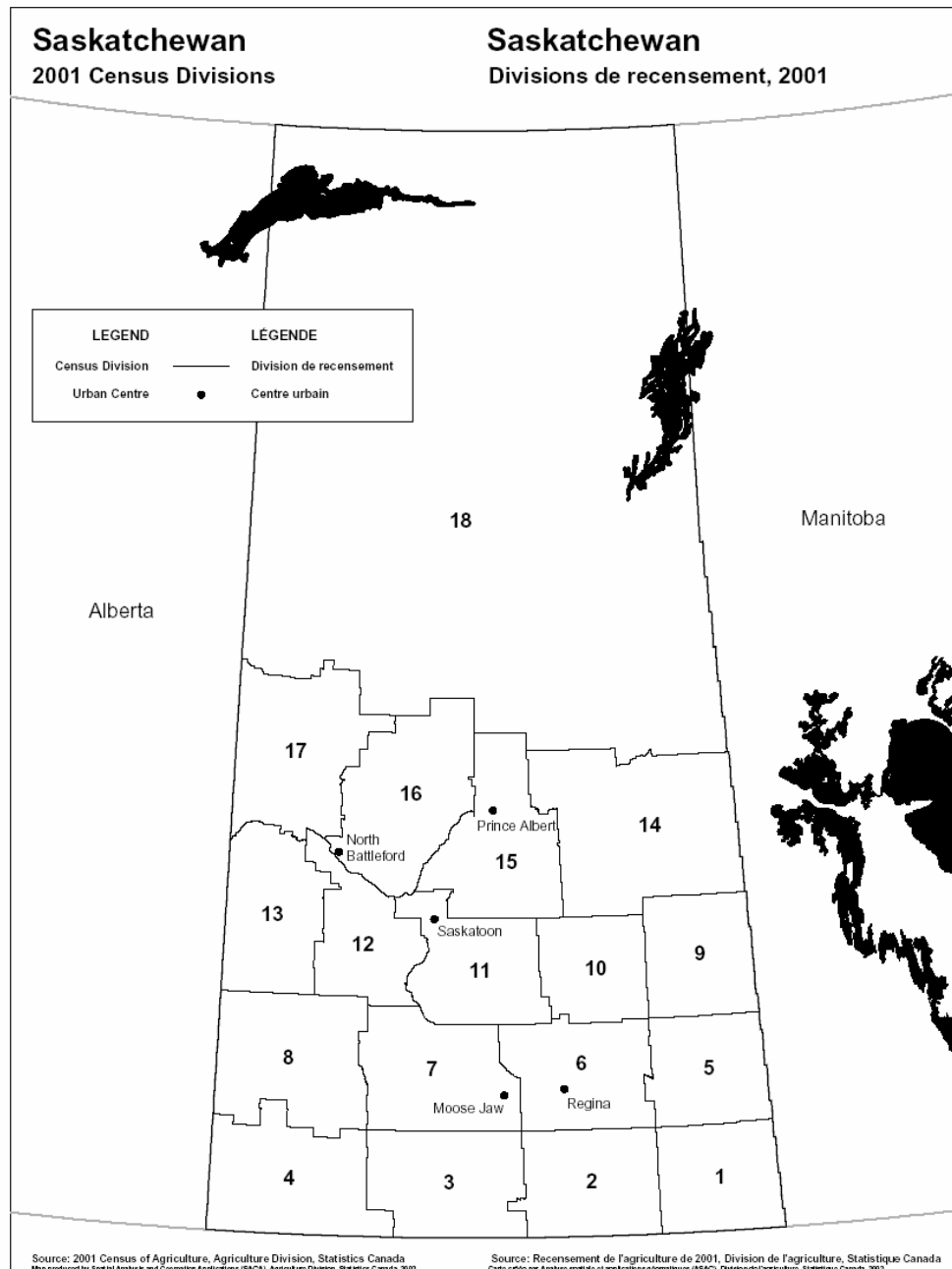
The occupations of women employed in the forestry and agriculture industries in Canada are highlighted in Table 5. In primary agriculture industries, women were overwhelmingly employed in occupations unique to primary industries, such as farm operators and agricultural or horticultural workers. The second largest group of women were employed in business, finance and administrative occupations, which includes clerical and secretarial workers followed by occupations in sales and service.

Census Division	Primary Agriculture	Agriculture Manufacturing	Primary Forestry	Forestry Manufacturing
	#	#	#	#
1	1,055	30	0	25
2	1,120	10	10	0
3	1,165	20	0	0
4	1,065	10	0	0
5	1,305	25	0	0
6	1,795	195	10	20
7	1,360	95	0	30
8	1,515	45	0	0
9	1,205	150	25	10
10	910	235	0	0
11	2,225	635	20	110
12	1,215	85	0	0
13	1,310	20	0	0
14	1,730	40	45	125
15	1,745	30	115	190
16	1,220	70	65	70
17	985	40	35	90
18	10	10	65	15
Total	22,935	1,740	375	675
Rural	20,270	520	275	275
Urban	2,665	1,220	100	400

Source: Statistics Canada (2001).

	Primary Agriculture		Agriculture Manufacturing		Primary Forestry		Forestry Manufacturing	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
A. Management	995	0.6	4,880	5.4	480	2.9	1,660	4.8
B. Business, finance and administrative	14,035	8.5	14,405	15.9	6,900	42.2	12,985	37.1
C. Natural and applied sciences and related	1,785	1.1	3,215	3.6	1,820	11.1	1,755	5.0
D. Health	235	0.1	215	0.2	100	0.6	225	0.6
E. Social science, education and government services	225	0.1	335	0.4	85	0.5	130	0.4
F. Arts, culture, recreation and sport	495	0.3	150	0.2	90	0.6	375	1.1
G. Sales and service	6,485	3.9	18,235	20.2	1,000	6.1	2,005	5.7
H. Trades, transport and equipment operators	900	0.5	1,530	1.7	360	2.2	1,985	5.7
I. Occupations unique to primary industry	138,915	83.6	300	0.3	5,310	32.5	555	1.6
J. Occupations unique to processing, manufacturing and utilities	2,065	1.2	47,070	52.1	220	1.4	13,315	38.1
Total	166,135	100	90,375	100	16,345	100	34,980	100

Source: Statistics Canada (2001).

Figure1: Saskatchewan Census Divisions

In 2001, 90,375 women worked in agriculture manufacturing industries in Canada; 52.1 percent of the women were machine operators or labourers in occupations unique to processing and manufacturing. Sales and service occupations engaged 20.2 percent and 15.9 percent were employed in business, finance and administrative occupations.

Women in the primary forest industries in Canada were employed in occupations unique to processing and manufacturing, followed by sales and service occupations and business, finance and administrative occupations. In the forest manufacturing sector, the largest group

(38.1 percent) of women were in occupations unique to processing and manufacturing followed closely by women working in business, finance and administrative occupations (37.1 percent). Women were fairly evenly represented at approximately five percent in natural and applied sciences, sales and service occupations, trades and management occupations.

Table 6 illustrates that women accounted for 30.2 percent of the primary agriculture labour force and 27.9 percent of the agriculture manufacturing labour force in Saskatchewan. In the forest sector, women accounted for 17.3 percent of workers in the primary forestry industries, and 17.8 percent of workers in forestry manufacturing industries. Women in Saskatchewan made up a slightly higher percentage of workers in forestry industries than the Canadian average.

In Saskatchewan, 1,725 women worked in agriculture manufacturing industries in 2001. Of these, 54.2 percent were working in occupations unique to processing and manufacturing, most often as machine operators or labourers. Another 18.8 percent worked in sales and service occupations and 17.8 percent worked in business, finance and administrative occupations. In Saskatchewan, a higher percentage of women in the primary sector worked as farm operators and labourers than in the rest of Canada. Women working in agriculture manufacturing industries in Saskatchewan were represented in the business, finance and administrative occupations and the occupations unique to processing and manufacturing to a greater extent than women in Canada as a whole.

In Saskatchewan, 375 women worked in primary forest industries including timber tract operations, forest nurseries, logging and support activities for forestry. Women working at occupations unique to primary industry were predominantly labourers and logging and forestry workers (38.7 percent). The second largest groups of women were in business, finance and administrative occupations (34.7 percent) which were predominantly clerical and secretarial positions. Women also had higher than average representation in sales and service occupations and in the trades. In the forestry manufacturing industries, approximately one third of women were working in the business, finance and administrative occupations, most often in clerical and secretarial occupations. Another 34.6 percent worked in occupations unique to processing and manufacturing, most often as labourers or machine operators.

Women working in primary forestry in Canada were present in higher proportions in the business, finance and administrative occupations, natural and applied sciences, health and social science, education and government services occupations than women in Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan women were more highly represented in some of the less traditional occupations, such as management, trades, sales and service, and occupations unique to processing and manufacturing.

In the forestry manufacturing sector, census data suggested that Saskatchewan women were again more highly represented in management, trades, sales and service, and occupations unique to processing and manufacturing and social science, education and government services occupations.

	Primary Agriculture Industries		Agriculture Manufacturing		Primary Forestry Industries		Forestry Manufacturing	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
A. Management	55	0.2	80	4.6	15	4.0	55	8.3
B. Business, finance and administrative	1,615	7.0	305	17.8	130	34.7	235	35.3
C. Natural and applied sciences and related	125	0.5	35	2.0	10	2.7	25	3.8
D. Health	20	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0
E. Social science, education and government services	25	0.1	10	0.6	0	0	10	1.5
F. Arts, culture, recreation and sport	10	0.0	10	0.6	0	0	15	2.3
G. Sales and service	460	2.0	325	18.8	35	9.3	40	6.0
H. Trades, transport and equipment operators	105	0.5	20	1.2	30	8.0	65	9.8
I. Occupations unique to primary industry	20,465	89.2	10	.06	145	38.7	0	0
J. Occupations unique to processing, manufacturing and utilities	60	0.3	935	54.2	10	2.7	230	34.6
Total	22,930	100	1,725	100	375	100	665	100

Source: Statistics Canada (2001).

It is interesting to note that the occupations of women in Saskatchewan in the agriculture sectors were less diverse than the Canadian average, while those of women in the forest sectors were more diverse than the Canadian average with higher than average numbers of women in management, sales and service, and trades, transport and equipment operators. This may reflect the more recent establishment of many of the forestry companies in Saskatchewan, at a time when traditional female work roles are being challenged and there are many more women in the labour force.

Occupations of Women and Men in Agriculture and Forestry

Table 7 reveals that Canadian women made up 88.4 percent of the workers in business, finance and administrative occupations, 81.2 percent of the workers in arts, culture, recreation and sport, 67.6 percent of workers in sales and service occupations and 59.5 percent of workers in health occupations in the primary agriculture industries. These are the traditional areas in which women have found employment. Women working in primary agriculture industries were also present in significant numbers in a range of occupations, with trades the only occupation where women made up less than 32 percent of workers.

Women in agriculture manufacturing made up over 50 percent of the workers in four occupational categories, including business, finance and administrative occupations; health occupations; social science, education and government services; arts, culture, recreation and sport. Unlike the situation in primary agriculture industries, women did not dominate sales

and service occupations. Women also account for smaller proportions of management occupations, natural and applied science and related occupations, and trades occupations.

Occupations	Primary Agriculture Industries		Agriculture Manufacturing	
	% F	% M	% F	% M
A. Management	32.8	67.2	27.9	72.1
B. Business, finance and administrative	88.4	11.6	59.6	40.4
C. Natural and applied sciences and related	40.3	59.7	41.7	58.3
D. Health	59.5	40.5	65.2	34.8
E. Social science, education and government services	46.4	53.6	56.8	43.2
F. Arts, culture, recreation and sport	81.2	18.8	68.2	31.8
G. Sales and service	67.6	32.4	46.2	53.8
H. Trades, transport and equipment operators	8.0	92.0	6.2	93.8
I. Occupations unique to primary industry	32.6	67.4	21.5	78.5
J. Occupations unique to processing, manufacturing and utilities	48.8	51.2	42.3	57.7
Total	34.9	65.1	39.8	60.2

Source: Statistics Canada (2001).

As shown in Table 8, women account for more than 50 percent of the workers in business, finance and administrative occupations, health occupations, arts, culture, recreation and sport, and sales and service occupations, in Saskatchewan's primary agricultural industries. Again, these are the traditional areas in which women have found employment. However, women working in primary agriculture industries were also present in significant numbers in a range of occupations, with no occupational category having fewer than 12 percent of women employed.

There was a greater degree of gender segregation in the agriculture manufacturing industries. Compared to the primary agricultural industries, women in agriculture manufacturing made up over 50 percent of the workers in only three occupational categories: business, finance and administrative occupations; health occupations; and arts, culture, recreation and sport. Compared to men, women also made up smaller proportions of management occupations, natural and applied science and related occupations, social science, education and government services and trades occupations.

Occupational segregation is stronger in the agricultural industries in Saskatchewan than in Canada as a whole. Women in primary agriculture industries in Canada were better represented in non-traditional women's occupations, such as management occupations, natural and applied science, social science, education and government services and occupations unique to primary industries than women in Saskatchewan. When women in Saskatchewan's agriculture manufacturing industries were compared to the Canadian average, women were less represented in all occupations with the exception of arts, culture, recreation and sport, which had very small numbers of workers.

Occupational segregation is higher in forestry than in agriculture with men overwhelmingly dominant in traditional male occupational areas, such as management; natural and applied

sciences; social science, education and government services; sales and service; trades, transport and equipment operators; occupations unique to primary industry and occupations unique to processing, manufacturing and utilities. Similarly, women dominate the business, finance, and administrative category, which includes clerical and secretarial workers. As seen in Table 9, women made up only 15.2 percent of the primary labour force in forestry and 14.2 percent of the forestry manufacturing labour force in Canada. In primary forestry, women filled 86.5 percent of the business, finance and administrative occupations followed by 50.6 percent of the sales and service occupations. Women made up between 30 percent and 50 percent of the workers in health occupations, arts, culture and recreation and sport occupations and sales and service occupations.

Occupations	Primary Agriculture Industries		Agricultural Manufacturing	
	% F	% M	% F	% M
A. Management	21.2	78.8	18.4	81.6
B. Business, finance and administrative	91.8	9.2	61.0	39.0
C. Natural and applied sciences and related	37.9	62.1	26.0	74.0
D. Health	66.7	33.3	0	0
E. Social science, education and government services	31.3	68.7	28.6	71.4
F. Arts, culture, recreation and sport	66.7	33.3	100	0
G. Sales and service	79.3	20.7	37.8	62.2
H. Trades, transport and equipment operators	12.1	87.9	2.4	97.6
I. Occupations unique to primary industry	28.5	71.5	22.2	77.8
J. Occupations unique to processing, manufacturing and utilities	21.7	78.3	27.7	72.3
Total	30.2	69.8	27.9	72.1

Source: Statistics Canada 2001.

Occupations	Primary Forestry Industries		Forestry Manufacturing	
	% F	% M	% F	% M
A. Management	9.3	90.7	12.6	87.4
B. Business, finance and administrative	86.5	13.5	64.9	35.1
C. Natural and applied sciences and related	17.0	83.0	14.0	86.0
D. Health	46.5	53.5	45.0	55.0
E. Social science, education and government services	30.9	69.1	27.1	72.9
F. Arts, culture, recreation and sport	48.7	51.3	35.1	64.9
G. Sales and service	50.6	49.4	24.5	75.5
H. Trades, transport and equipment operators	2.2	97.8	3.3	96.7
I. Occupations unique to primary industry	8.7	91.3	8.2	91.8
J. Occupations unique to processing, manufacturing and utilities	7.0	93.0	10.8	89.2
TOTAL	15.2	84.8	14.2	85.8

Source: Statistics Canada 2001.

Table 9 shows that in forestry manufacturing, women made up more than 50 percent of the workers only in business, finance and administrative occupations. Similar to the primary forest industries, women comprised 24 to 45 percent of the workers in health occupations; social science, education and government services; arts, culture and recreation and sport

occupations and sales and service occupations, in the Canadian forestry manufacturing industries. Compared to the primary forestry industries women had higher representation in management occupations in the forestry manufacturing sector, but lower representation in most of the other occupations.

Women were a smaller proportion of the labour force in Saskatchewan forestry industries than in Saskatchewan agricultural industries. Table 10 shows that women were dominant in business, finance and administrative occupations and sales and service occupations. In Saskatchewan, there were no workers in health occupations, arts, culture, recreation and sport or social science, education and government services in the primary forest industries. Women had low rates of participation in the trades, occupations unique to primary and processing industries, management, and natural and applied sciences.

The forestry manufacturing industries had a higher proportion of women in management positions than the primary forestry industries, although none of those women were in senior management. Women were only dominant in business, finance and administrative occupations, which includes the traditional clerical and secretarial occupations. Compared to men, women also made up smaller proportions of management occupations, natural and applied science and related occupations, social science and trades occupations.

Table 10: Occupations of Saskatchewan Women and Men in Forestry Industries

Occupations	Primary Forestry Industries		Forestry Manufacturing	
	% F	% M	% F	% M
A. Management	12.0	88.0	22.9	77.1
B. Business, finance and administrative	86.7	13.3	75.8	24.2
C. Natural and applied sciences and related	5.4	94.6	9.4	90.6
D. Health	0	0	0	0
E. Social science, education and government services	0	0	0	0
F. Arts, culture, recreation and sport	0	0	27.3	72.7
G. Sales and service	63.6	36.4	38.1	61.9
H. Trades, transport and equipment operators	10.9	89.1	6.6	93.4
I. Occupations unique to primary industry	11.3	88.7	0	100
J. Occupations unique to processing, manufacturing and utilities	13.3	86.7	13.9	86.1
Total	17.3	82.7	17.8	82.2

Source: Statistics Canada (2001).

Women in Saskatchewan in both the primary forestry and forestry manufacturing industries occupied fewer natural and applied sciences occupations than the Canadian average. This anomaly is worth exploring, as women working in forestry tend to have higher rates of formal education than do men. Saskatchewan women had higher representation than the Canadian average in all other occupational categories in both primary forestry and forestry manufacturing industries.

	Agriculture				Forestry			
	Primary		Secondary		Primary		Secondary	
	% SK	% CAN	% SK	% CAN	% SK	% CAN	% SK	% CAN
Full-time, full-year	26	29	23	34	14	16	17	13
Full-time, part-year	24	34	29	45	15	10	16	13
Part-time, full-year	50	56	69	61	100	60	0	48
Part-time, part-year	39	44	53	56	19	26	17	25
In self-employment or did not work for pay	34	42	13	49	12	20	24	20

Source: Statistics Canada (2001).

Characteristics of Women Workers in Agriculture and Forestry

Work Type

As a percentage of the total number of workers in the forest sector in Saskatchewan and Canada, women were slightly overrepresented in part-time work and underrepresented in full-time employment. This trend was evident when examining the cumulative numbers for Canada and Saskatchewan. Although women only made up 15 percent of the work force in the forest sector in Canada, women made up 59 percent of the part-time, full-year employees and 26 percent of the part-time, part-year employees. Similarly, in Saskatchewan where women made up 18 percent of the work force in the forest sector, women were overrepresented in part-time positions making up 64 percent of the part-time, full-year employees. When these data were disaggregated into primary and secondary sectors, however, different patterns emerged for both Saskatchewan and Canada.

In the secondary forest industries, the most striking difference between Saskatchewan and Canada was that while 48 percent of the part-time, full-year employees were women in Canada, there were no part-time, full-year employees in Saskatchewan (Table 11). Moreover, in forest manufacturing industries of Saskatchewan, women were more equally represented across all work types whereas in Canada the representational difference among women in full-time and part-time work types was more pronounced.

In the primary sector, the representation of women in different work types in Canada was more variable than that of Saskatchewan, similar to results found for the secondary sector. One exception to this statement is that in Saskatchewan, all the part-time, full-year employees were female while in Canada as a whole women made up 60 percent of the part-time, full-year employees.

Women in agriculture were also slightly overrepresented in part-time work and underrepresented in full-time work in both primary and secondary agricultural industries. These differences however were not as pronounced as they were for the forestry industries. In Canada, while females made up 36 percent of the agricultural labour force, they represented 56 percent of the part-time, full-year labour force and 44 percent of the part-time, part-year labour force. Saskatchewan had a similar situation where women made up

51 percent of the part-time, full-year labour force; however, women made up a smaller proportion of the part-time, part-year labour force compared to Canada as a whole.

In the secondary industries, Saskatchewan had a much smaller proportion of women who were self-employed or did not work for pay when compared to all of Canada. However, in secondary industries, 69 percent of the part-time, full-year labour force in Saskatchewan was female whereas in Canada females only represented 61 percent of the part-time, full-year labour force. Saskatchewan women in agricultural manufacturing were less well represented in the full-time categories than women in Canada. However, women in agricultural manufacturing were much more likely to be employed in full-time work than women in forest manufacturing.

Gendered patterns in work types in primary industries were similar to those in secondary industries. However, women made up a smaller proportion of the part-time, full-year labour force compared to the secondary industries, where they represented 50 percent of the part-time, full-year labour force. This was also a smaller proportion than in Canada where 56 percent of the part-time, full-year labour force was female. Females in the primary agricultural industries had a much larger representation of women who were employed full time compared to the primary forestry sector. Females in primary agricultural industries predominantly come from family farm operations, whereas in the forestry industries, women were more likely to be working for a company.

Income

In the forest sector in both Canada and Saskatchewan, more females had incomes in lower income brackets than males (Table 12). Moreover, the income bracket representing the greatest number of females in the forest industry for both Saskatchewan and Canada is less than \$10,000. In relation to Canada, Saskatchewan had a greater income disparity between males and females in the highest income categories. In the Saskatchewan forest sector, the greatest number of males was found in the highest income bracket (\$60,000 and over), while in Canada the greatest number of males had incomes between \$40,000 and \$59,000 (Figure 12). In addition, females in the forest sector in Saskatchewan were less likely to be in the mid-range income brackets than their Canadian counterparts, but slightly more likely to be in the highest income brackets.

Similar to the forestry sector, more women in Saskatchewan and Canada working in the agriculture sector had incomes in the lower income brackets than did men. A large proportion of females (32 percent) made less than \$10,000. The income disparity between males and females in Canada and Saskatchewan was similar. A higher percentage of males than females was in higher income brackets. Males employed in agriculture in Saskatchewan also had lower incomes when compared to the rest of Canada.

Women and men working in agriculture reported lower incomes than those working in forestry. This is partially related to the large number of farms represented in the data. Family farms within the last decade have undergone tremendous change. Due to increasing input prices and decreasing commodity prices, farm income is low (Martz 2004). In primary

agriculture, men and women were more likely to fall in the less than \$10,000 income bracket, than men and women employed in forestry.

Income	Agriculture				Forestry			
	Saskatchewan		Canada		Saskatchewan		Canada	
	% F	% M	% F	% M	% F	% M	% F	% M
Less than \$10,000	32	29	32	24	24	22	20	13
\$10,000 - \$19,999	25	23	27	18	21	14	20	12
\$20,000 - \$29,999	18	18	19	18	15	11	20	15
\$30,000 - \$39,999	11	13	11	15	12	11	16	15
\$40,000 - \$59,999	9	11	8	15	20	15	17	25
\$60,000 and over	5	7	4	9	9	27	7	21

Source: Statistics Canada (2001).

Education

Forestry workers in secondary industries tend to have higher levels of education (Table 13), and females in both the secondary and primary forestry sectors were better educated than their male counterparts. More males obtained technical and trade certificates or diplomas while more women attended university. The highest level of education attained by the greatest number of men and women working in the primary sector was high school (with or without diploma).

Education	Agriculture				Forestry			
	Primary		Secondary		Primary		Secondary	
	% F	% M	% F	% M	% F	% M	% F	% M
< Grade 9	15	17	4	6	5	14	0	7
Grade 9-13	48	50	54	56	43	43	34	40
Some post-secondary	5	4	6	6	8	6	5	5
Non-university certificate	18	16	23	23	27	24	34	38
Some university, not graduated	9	8	8	7	10	9	17	5
University, bachelor's degree	4	4	5	4	6	4	9	5

Source: Statistics Canada (2001).

Interestingly, there were no real differences in the educational attainment between males and females in the primary and secondary agricultural industries. Differences did arise between the primary and secondary industries where both males and females had lower educational attainment in primary industries versus secondary industries. High school (with or without a diploma) is the most common level of educational attainment for males and females. More males and females attained technical and trades certificates or diplomas in the secondary industries versus the primary industries. Very few individuals in either industry sector had university or some university.

Age

Women working in primary agriculture are much older than the women employed in the other sectors (Table 14). This can be explained by the aging trend among Canada's farmers. Primary agriculture also has a much smaller number of females between the ages of 25 and 34 compared to the other industries. Generally, this is the transition age between leaving home and starting a family. Often individuals in this age category will work in other industries, before coming back to the family farm operation to raise their own families. In both agricultural manufacturing and primary forestry the average age of females was between 35 and 44 with the average age of women in forestry manufacturing slightly younger. Women in the age category from 45 and 54 were equally represented among all four industries.

Age	Agriculture		Forestry	
	% Primary	% Secondary	% Primary	% Secondary
15-24	13	21	24	30
25-34	8	20	20	20
35-44	18	31	27	33
45-54	21	22	17	11
55-64	20	5	9	6
65 and over	20	1	0	2

Source: Statistics Canada (2001).

Summary

Women in Canada are better represented in the labour force in primary and secondary agriculture than in primary and secondary forestry operations. In Saskatchewan, women make up only 30 percent of the labour force in primary agriculture, less than the Canadian average of 35 percent. In primary agriculture, this is linked to the predominant type of agriculture being grains, oil seeds and cattle, types of agriculture in which women have not traditionally been operators and which have not hired female labour. Similarly in agricultural manufacturing, the percent of women in the labour force (27.9 percent) is the lowest in Canada. In primary forestry, women make up 15.2 percent of the labour force in Canada and 17.3 percent of the labour force in Saskatchewan. In forestry manufacturing, women make up 15.2 percent of the labour force in Canada and 17.8 percent of the labour force in Saskatchewan. Women are slightly better represented in the forest industries in Saskatchewan due to the recent growth of that industry at a time when barriers are dropping and women are begin encouraged to work in the forest sector.

The occupational patterns of Saskatchewan women in the forest industries are similar to those of Canada. The vast majority of women employed in primary agriculture work as farm operators and labourers. In agricultural manufacturing, over 50 percent of female workers in both Saskatchewan and Canada work in occupations unique to processing and manufacturing as machine operators and labourers, occupations that women have traditionally held in this industry. Women are also represented in large numbers in the business, finance and administration category, in traditional women's jobs as clerical and secretarial workers. In

primary forestry, the pattern is both traditional and non-traditional with women predominately working as labourers, and logging and forest workers and, secondarily, in business, finance and administration (clerical and secretarial) positions. While in forest manufacturing, the traditional occupation of business, finance and administration employs the largest group of women, but it is closely followed by occupations unique to processing, manufacturing and utilities (machine operators and labourers).

Occupational segregation remains strong in both forestry and agri-food industries, with forestry demonstrating greater inequality in both primary and secondary sectors. In forestry, men fill, on average, over 80 percent of most occupational categories with the exception of business, finance and administration (clerical and secretarial) positions, where women fill over 80 percent of the positions. In this industry, women are most often working with other women and men are most often working with other men. However, in Saskatchewan, women do hold higher percentages of the traditional male jobs in management, sales and services, trades and occupations unique to processing and utilities indicating some women have made inroads into traditionally male domains.

Hanson and Pratt (1995) argued that women's work tends to be characterized by low wages and fringe benefits, poor conditions, high labour turnover, little chance of advancement and often arbitrary and capricious supervision. Little (2002) further noted that women often accept part-time, temporary and casual work, with low pay, no benefits and no opportunity for promotion. Some of these characteristics are evident in the agriculture and forest industries in Saskatchewan and Canada. Women's incomes have been shown to be lower than men's incomes in forestry and in agriculture. Women are overrepresented in part-time and underrepresented in full-time, full-year employment in these industries. Saskatchewan has lower rates of full-time, full-year employment in primary agriculture, agriculture manufacturing and primary forestry industries than the Canadian average. However, Saskatchewan has higher rates of full-time, full-year employment in forestry manufacturing.

The trend in primary agriculture was toward an aging population, where a large percentage of the labour force was 65 years and over. Women working in the manufacturing sectors were younger on average than women working in the primary sectors in both forestry and agriculture. Education levels were higher in forestry than in agriculture and also higher in the manufacturing industries than the primary industries. There was little difference in the education levels of men and women in agriculture; however, in forestry, women tended to be better educated than men.

The following section considers in greater depth the experiences of work as explained by women during interviews. The women interviewed are not representative of the sector as described by the Statistics Canada data in this section. Instead, they represent women who have taken up some of the opportunities that are beginning to arise for women in these industries. In primary agriculture, the women we interviewed do not work on the family farm, but are instead predominantly working as waged labour in intensive livestock production facilities, a recent development in primary agriculture. In forestry, although we did interview women in clerical and secretarial positions, we focussed on women moving into non-traditional occupations in the forest sector.

5. IN THEIR OWN VOICES: WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCES

This section reviews the experiences of women in the agri-food and forestry industries based on interviews conducted in 2004. Women were asked questions about how they found their job, why they chose their job, alternative job opportunities with their employers and in their rural community, how women perceived their work, what arrangements they made to balance home care and employment, the quality of their work (i.e., wages, health and safety, harassment, discrimination) and worker-worker and worker-employer relations.

Job Opportunities

Women employed in agri-food and forestry felt the job opportunities available in rural areas were still very traditional, particularly outside of their industry. They indicated that women were most likely to find positions as waitresses, child-care providers, nurses and teachers' aides, or in secretarial and accounting positions. When asked what they would do if they lost their job, women indicated they had few options and could only find work as waitresses, secretaries at small businesses, hairdressers, janitors or as clerks in retail stores.

In both the hog industry and forestry industry, women viewed their employment as less traditional.

We do have more women taking a challenge to do a different job. Like they're, I don't know, maybe a little bit more gutsy I could say now. You know, like the non-traditional roles. They're going in there to be a supervisor, they're going into that, more fork-lift drivers, more outside machine operators.

Women in forestry identified opportunities to work as loggers, electricians, lumber graders, technicians and machine operators to name just a few. In the hog industry, women have increased opportunities to become assistant managers or managers of hog barns. Similarly, women working in both industries expressed the uniqueness of these opportunities. They did not feel they would have similar opportunities available at other companies outside of their respective industries.

On the other hand, women working in clerical and administrative positions in both forestry and agri-food industries felt they could find similar work at another company. They did not feel they had any limitations within their local community. However, women working in clerical and administrative positions were more likely to indicate that these positions are harder to come by, because of the level of competition that exists for these positions.

Like if you're talking opportunities for women, this is where most women want to be, we have numerous applications for clerical and administration here, but limited room because we do try to do more with less.

Women working in both industries also noted the limitations of not having an education. As one woman said:

But really with no education and with the benefit package, you know, I think you would have to start going in to education and some things like that if you would want anything better.

Women in the agri-food industry noted that to get any good job, whether one had the education or not, one would have to be willing to move to a larger centre.

Overall, women felt that job opportunities available in rural communities are limited, particularly jobs that pay a decent wage. One woman working in the meat processing sector indicated that the good paying jobs that people used to go to such as the public service, utility companies and the railroads no longer exist in rural areas. The lack of jobs in predominantly rural areas also means there are few alternative jobs that pay as well if their first job does not work out. Women frequently commented that the only opportunities available to them would be minimum waged service sector jobs. One woman noted that while she could work for a smaller business she would have to be willing to take a severe wage reduction, which she really didn't want to do.

I'm making more, and I mean not just five cents more an hour, like I'm making almost a dollar an hour more after five years at the hog barn than I was after 12 years at the dentist.

Women working in both industries also noted how minimum wage jobs did not provide an adequate income to be able to survive and pay for their day to day needs without being reliant on someone else to help pay the bills.

How do you be self-sufficient on the minimum wage.... You have to have either a room-mate or a live in boyfriend, God help you, and that brings up another whole subject of ...why should you have to be counting on your fella or your husband...to help you pay the bills?

Women with small children were also quick to point out that the income from a minimum wage job

would all go to daycare so it isn't worth it.

A few women working in the agri-food industry noted they had postponed going back to work, because they could not afford the child-care bills when working at minimum wage employment.

Women working in forestry saw the possibility of moving to other forestry operations in the region, whereas women in agri-food processing saw other intensive livestock operations as possible alternatives. However, many of the women in forestry were more willing to be mobile, recognizing opportunities available to them further away in other centres. This may

reflect the clustering of forest operations around larger centres and the need for women wanting forestry work to travel or relocate to get employment. In fact, a number of women in the forestry industry had relocated to their respective employment from other provinces, such as British Columbia and Ontario. Alternatively, women working in both the meat processing and hog industries were more tightly bound to their locations, some because they were linked to family farm operations and some because of close connections with family and community members. None of the women interviewed in the agri-food sector had relocated to their home communities from other provinces because of employment opportunities, although some had moved to their communities because of family connections.

Job Opportunities for Women

Women in both the forestry and agri-food industries stated that more women were entering the work force and that employment opportunities for women were increasing compared to 2001. Not only did women from the hog industry indicate they could find work in the hog barns, but they listed opportunities considered to be traditionally male including jobs as welders, custom combiners, grain haulers, veterinarians, managers, government jobs, chemical representatives as well as jobs in the grain industry, cattle industry and in home based-businesses. One woman said:

To me, it was a man's world before. I like to see women in that now...like all the vets we're getting now, they're women vets, they're not all men vets. That's something I love to see, things like that happening.

Another woman stated that the opportunities are increasing because attitudes toward women seem to have changed.

We are not just put on this earth to waitress and make babies, we can do the hard stuff too.

One woman observed that women's attitudes have changed, so they feel more confident in going out and getting work.

It's still the old ways of thinking that are stuck in people's minds and it's hard for some women to jump past that in their own mind, but once they get through those stereotypes...things are going to change.

Women working in the agricultural processing sector felt that in their region, women were working out while the men were working on the farm and staying home to care for the children.

Instead of the men going out, the women do.

Women employed in the agri-food industry also observed that opportunities for women are increasing because the men in the communities leave during the winter months to work on the oil rigs, in the mines, in the forestry sector, to drive trucks, and in some cases, even more

to international destinations for good wages. As a result, husbands leave the home, farm, and children to be managed by their female partners until the men return home in the spring.

One half of the women interviewed in the forest industry also acknowledged that opportunities for women were increasing. Contributing factors included access to technical training, affirmative action policies, men becoming used to working with women, and younger men (with more progressive attitudes toward women co-workers) replacing the older men in the workplace. Some women thought there was already equality in the workplace.

If it's an opening there, we can take any job we want

and

equal opportunity for equal knowledge.

Others felt it was still a battle. One woman noted that the mill she worked at hired women as workers when they didn't have enough male employees and encouraged the men to tell their wives about job opportunities.

Women in the agri-food industry also felt that they brought particular qualities to the workplace, for example, their ability to think on their feet, they have a lot of common sense, and farm work is not just a man's job. Some of the maternal, caring roles associated with women are also viewed as beneficial in the barns, especially working with the baby pigs. Some of the women commented on how their employers recognize this and, as a result, are preferentially hiring women in the nursery and farrowing barns over men, favouring patience and caring over strength and toughness. Another woman noted that companies actively recruit women welders, because

they're good, they're more efficient, they do their work better, more picky.

Similar comments were made by women in the forestry sector, where interviewees noted that women could more easily put up with repetitious work — the “boring stuff.” One woman noted how her employers like hiring women, because they were better organized and paid closer attention to detail than the men.

In some cases, I think some of the guys like the fact that I'm a woman, because you look at things a little differently and women tend to organize things and pick up details that the guys don't look at.

Not all the women were optimistic about the availability of employment for women in rural communities, but rather they felt things had not changed all that much. Some of the women in forestry and agri-food noted how discrimination in rural communities still existed and gave examples of how the traditional roles were evident.

Well, if you notice, like we have plumbing and we have the landscaping people and it's not very often that you see women plumbers. You don't see

women doing landscaping unless they're in their own garden or yard you know...most cashiers are women, but we don't have men working [there]."

One woman in forestry indicated that she would have difficulty in finding an electrician job outside of forestry.

I went to school in [names town] for my electrical and it was very tough for me to get a job afterward, just, basically I guess being female, it was hard to find work.

One woman working for one of the meat processing companies indicated how the work she does has always been viewed as women's work.

Over the years, it has been a woman's job; it's never been classy work, and it's always been the work that people have looked down on. "Oh you work at the [processing] plant" and predominantly the people that did the processing work on the floor are women and of course the preferable jobs are the maintenance and the truckers and all that, well that's man jobs, right? And that wasn't looked down on...[and] it was looked down upon because it wasn't considered a nice job. You come out of here at the end of the day, you smelled, you were tired, your clothes were stained.

However, as services and other businesses leave rural communities, the agri-food processing jobs are increasingly viewed as ideal.

You don't get the jobs in the bank anymore, there's not the teacher's aides, the hospital work is all changed... so this has actually become a good job. You know a full-time one with benefits, rarely a chance to get laid off, so the perspective from the community has changed, but it's still women's work.

Finding Employment

Half the women employed in the agri-food industry found their employment through informal networks. People who were aware of job openings contacted women needing a job or who they thought would work out well. This strategy is based on a perception that informal networks provide better quality workers. If a person is recommended

she will probably be good, instead of taking any stranger off the street.

Three women indicated they were head hunted by their employer, because they were familiar with the kind of work required. The remaining women found their jobs through advertisements in the newspaper, posters in local businesses, training placements from an educational institution or by distributing résumés. One woman answered an advertisement for training that led to her job and another found her job from an advertisement at the local regional economic development authority. The women working at one particular meat processor noted that while they had to put their résumé in to the company, most people

knew that the company was always hiring and that it was a job that paid higher than minimum wage.

Two hog employers and their employees noted that their hiring process was becoming more formal, particularly for professional, clerical and technical workers. One hog employer noted that the company still relied heavily on word of mouth methods to recruit labourers due to the limited number of good quality employees in the area. The employer further mentioned that the company offered a \$500 referral bonus to staff members who recruited new staff members. Both hog employers noted that their management positions are filled internally, where they advance their top employees through the company. The meat processing company employer noted that 80 percent of its hiring was through word of mouth and the remainder through advertising methods.

In the forest industry, hiring processes were more formal, possibly due to the presence of unions in these companies. Although many of the women were notified by friends and relatives about job openings, the women still had to go through a formal process of filling out applications and being interviewed. Many women responded to newspaper advertisements, two found their jobs on the Internet, one was approached by the company, and one was recruited while she was in training.

Nine women in forestry felt they were hired based on their employer's affirmative action policy.

I think there's an emphasis through trying to meet those labour diversity targets, so whether it's hiring women or hiring an Aboriginal or hiring a visible minority, those sorts of things, they're always there.

Another woman thought that to meet minority quotas her employer hired women in clerical and administrative positions and then only a few in non-traditional roles. Three women employed in forestry felt that hiring was based on connections in the company, such as having family members working in the mill. Four other women felt that hiring was still largely discriminatory against women, particularly those with families.

People automatically assumed I was married and once they assume you're married they think you have kids and I wasn't touched.

Compared to the agri-food industry, the forestry companies used more formal methods to hire new staff. One employer noted that hiring is mostly based on formal methods, such as advertising in the newspaper or through the Internet. For professionals and technical workers, hiring was strictly through formal methods, whereas hiring for management positions was based on an internal hiring process. Only 20 percent of clerical workers and labourers were hired through word of mouth. Another employer noted that none of the professionals, trades workers or managers was hired through informal methods, but the majority of their clerical staff was through word of mouth and ad hoc résumés placed at the company. The final employer noted that the majority of the hiring occurred through word of

mouth, and they preferred to hire locally. As they were based in a small rural community, it was unnecessary to advertise as everyone generally knew when a position came open.

Forestry companies operating in northern Saskatchewan that sought local residents were more likely than agri-food companies to seek Aboriginal workers. One company official suggested that companies were now trying to recruit Aboriginal workers by meeting potential employees living on nearby reserves. The employer expressed some frustration that unions did not support establishing “equity positions” as such a policy would go against the long-standing practice of respecting seniority. By going onto reserves directly, however, the company believed it could recruit a more diverse locally based work force that would benefit local communities. Despite an interest in hiring local Aboriginal peoples, forestry companies not owned by Aboriginal peoples did not have policies particular to Aboriginal workers, either at the recruitment stage or once Aboriginal workers were hired. Policies addressing such things as leaves of absence and workplace conduct were seen to apply equally to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

Challenges in Finding Employment

Half the women in forestry and more than half the women in agri-food felt they did not have any challenges in either finding or taking employment. One woman felt that finding employment in forestry was the solution she needed to care for her child, as she was paying high child-care costs. With the exception of arranging child care and managing the family, women in the forestry and agri-food sectors had marked differences in the challenges they faced. Women in forestry noted they had to deal with negative perceptions, relocating to a new community, handling the physical aspects of the job and working into a male environment. Women in agri-food, on the other hand, noted that family reputation, length of time out of work, and age were their main challenges.

Ten women in forestry and four women in agri-food noted the biggest challenges they had currently were associated with managing family responsibilities, including arranging for child care. None of the operations had child-care facilities on site. The availability of good quality child care was an issue for younger women in forestry, particularly for women working shift work. As one woman stated:

Now to find a baby-sitter, a good baby-sitter who will go with shift work, so yeah that would be hard.

Shifts ending at midnight made regular child care out of the question, even if it was available in the local community. Some women in forestry grappled with whether they should have started work with young children, but felt it was necessary economically and personally for themselves.

If I [had started] working a couple years before I had the kids, I think it would have been easier. It wouldn't have been as much of a challenge, because I would have been more established in my job, but you know things worked out O.K. so far.”

One woman working in the hog sector noted that her decision to go back to work was initially an issue both for her husband and children.

I was home...off and on, for 13 years, and it was quite a shock for everybody for me to be gone like that.

She further went on to explain that it was really hard for her children to adjust, because they had to pick up extra home and farm chores.

Women entering into forestry often have to deal with the stigma of being a woman and are often required to challenge the traditional norms and ideologies. One woman in forestry noted she had to convince her grandfather she was able to work in forestry and another woman mentioned that her father was uncertain about her working in the industry.

I have an old fashioned father who thinks “why would my daughter go into forestry?” ...He is very positive and happy where I am, but at that time having a daughter going into a man’s career, it was kind of weird.

On the other hand, another woman in forestry had to convince neighbours she wasn’t going to be working with a group of men who were

going to gang rape me.

Some women in both agri-food and forestry noted the small town setting presented challenges in hiring and promotion. Women worried they would not get hired in places where their husbands were working. Women in agri-food industries cited examples where they felt hiring was done on the basis of relationships. They also noted the barriers of having a family name that was associated with a negative reputation or living at an undesirable address.

Around here, it depends on your name; it depends on your last name. It’s a bad town.

Being a new person in a rural community can also be a challenge when community members do not know who is applying, but also because

it’s not what you know, it’s who you know.

In forestry, family reputation is not as much of a problem, as a number of women had relocated from other communities to work for their employer. However, the challenge for some of these women was to relocate to a new community with few, if any social activities. For other women, arranging long distance travel and leaving their former employment to complete an interview was a challenge. Another woman mentioned that her challenge was to work in isolation in the bush, where she had little contact with others.

I had never worked in the bush before. I had never been out to the bush alone let alone finding land locations out in the back of nowhere.

Women of Aboriginal descent noted that leaving their home community and family was difficult, because they were removed from their family networks. For example, one woman said:

Coming here and not having any family and then working the long hours and shift work, that was my biggest challenge.

In rural communities, the availability of work for women in their home community is often a challenge, and for one woman in agri-food, travelling to another community to obtain employment was difficult.

It was either to [community respondent works in] or to Saskatoon, but there's nothing really there; there's that meat plant. I had applied there, but it's an hour drive and I didn't want to.

Two women in agri-food felt their age was a limiting factor in finding employment.

I've worked 33 years, so you're at an age where, who's going to hire you when you are 50 plus.

In the hog industry, however, older individuals and families are the desired target groups, and they are viewed as more stable than the younger generation. Wages and benefits that are viewed as competitive within the community are used as tools to recruit this particular age group.

Three women in agri-food also noted the length of time they had been out of work.

I was out of the work force for seven years raising my family, and [it was difficult] then to get back into it again. Like payroll changes, accounting changes.

Lack of experience in dealing with animals was also seen as a challenge.

It's so different, so different and it was new to me, so I had to learn their stuff, a little bit of their stuff...and it got my brain boggled.

Age in forestry was not considered to be a challenge in obtaining employment, but having the capability to do physical work was an issue. Some women noted they were working in a man's world and had to adjust quickly to handle the physical aspects of the job.

You don't have the strength of a man for one thing. So you learn to do things differently than they would in order to be able to lift or handle, and that was a challenge.

They also expressed concern about being able to maintain their jobs as their bodies became older. Women indicated that working in an environment that was predominantly male was also a challenge where one woman felt so intimidated she nearly did not go to work.

It was just so overwhelming to have to go into a job with so many men around and it was overwhelming for me personally to the point where I'm not going. My husband dragged me there.

Requirements for Employment

In both the forest and agri-food processing industries, women noted that strength was a requirement for many jobs. Women stated there were particular jobs they wouldn't physically be able to do. In the hog industry, the need for strength was seen as more of a requirement in the finishing barns, than in the nursery and farrowing barns. On the other hand, the need for compassion and the desire to care for babies was seen as a requirement in the nursery barns. In both industries, women noted that being less strong meant they had to work harder than the men in similar situations, and they learned to do things differently to compensate. Women also noted that with mechanization, strength was no longer viewed as a limitation, and it was not a factor in management jobs.

Lots of physical aspects to the job that a woman can't do, as for managerial position, you get the right women in there, she can do it.

Gender was portrayed as both a positive and a negative factor in getting a job and in getting promoted. As we have previously noted, certain "female" qualities were seen as desirable in the hog industry. Being a woman in the forestry sector was seen as a benefit when companies were trying to meet equity standards, and one woman anticipated faster promotion in her professional position, because she was a woman. Others recounted instances where they did not get a particular job, because they were female and noted that women were disadvantaged when working in areas of the industry where attitudes were less attuned to women's rights.

Women working in the agri-food processing industries felt that experience and work ethic were the more important requirements for being hired and doing their job. Some considered experience more important than education. Many women in the hog industry had gained experience, because of their farm background in a region that had traditionally raised pigs on farms.

Choosing a Job

Money was the most important reason women chose their jobs in both the forest and agri-food industries. In forestry, good wages were a more important consideration; however, for women working in both the forestry and agri-food sector, the reasons were quite diverse. Women chose their particular job in the agri-food industry for many reasons: financial, company reputation, location, the availability of work, enjoyment working with animals, a change of pace and good benefits. Women in the forestry sector chose their jobs for similar reasons including location, career opportunities, availability, good wages, change of pace, company reputation, enjoyment and the opportunity to work outdoors.

A significant difference between women in forestry and women in agri-food is that many women in the forest industry saw their jobs as a welcome challenge and a career opportunity, while women working in the agri-food processing sector did not view their jobs as careers, but felt they would have to leave and further their education if they wanted a career.

Wages, benefits and bonus programs were viewed as important incentives to women working in the agri-food industry. Women working in hog barns noted their employers paid better than the average rural job, especially with just a Grade 12 education compared to other alternatives that were minimum-waged jobs. Some companies also had a bonus program that women were able to access. Women were attracted by the benefits the companies offered; one woman noted she had never had benefits before.

Women working in agri-food and forestry both noted it was important that they had their own money, particularly as some of them were single parents supporting children. Two women from agri-food and one woman in forestry also indicated they were going through a divorce and felt they needed a job to be self-sufficient. Women working in the agri-food industry further noted they were looking for a change from staying at home and from working with the public, preferring to “talk to the pigs” over people.

Thirteen women interviewed in the agri-food industry were from a family farm and noted they were working off the farm to bring in extra income and supplement the household needs. For women with a farm background, working in the hog barns allowed them to use skills they had already developed, whereas other women saw it as an opportunity to work with animals. As one woman working in a nursery operation described:

How can you not enjoy watching baby pigs. Its like those...ads at Christmas, those little black and white pigs. I mean they're just darling. How can you not love it?

Women in the forestry industry noted their work provided them with opportunities to use the skills they had learned in school, both to further their knowledge and to work in an area of interest to them.

It was my interest...I went to university in forestry and I wanted to work.

Another woman was keen on the idea of working outside instead of being in an office job all day.

I wanted to be outside...I like that interaction between the outside and, I don't want to say nature that sounds so “hoaky,” but being able to be out in the woods.

Location was also an important consideration for women in both industries. If possible, women chose jobs close to home to cut down on travel time and to be home for their children after school. One woman chose a job closer to home when her daughter became a teenager, because she thought it was important to be more available during that time in her

child's life. Location was particularly important for Aboriginal women, so they could be closer to their family and friends. For some women, shift work fit well with their schedules, when they could complete a full week's work on the weekend leaving the week free for other activities and duties. For other women, the shift work and the distance to work made it difficult for them to be at home when they were needed.

Employment Experiences

Arranging for Work

Distance

Geographic and social isolation has frequently been considered a barrier to rural women's employment opportunities. However, the majority of women involved in this study did not feel that distance was a problem, despite the fact that some women had to travel on gravel roads or to contend with logging or farm trucks. On average, women from both the agricultural and forestry sector were travelling 10 to 30 minutes to get to work. Some women did indicate that while travelling was not an issue, bad weather often increased their travel time.

On a good day, it's about 30 minutes. If it's raining and stuff, it can take an hour to an hour and a half.

Distance was also a challenge for one respondent when combining it with her child-care needs. She indicated that while her job itself was only five miles away,

I do about 40 miles from my farm to the sitter to the barns and back again...I don't mind it at all this time of year but in winter it's a little crappy.

Two women working in forestry noted that travel was a major component of their job, where they could be travelling up to a 300 kilometre radius. However, this was not seen as a barrier as it was considered to be part of the job description.

Overall, the women did not find distance to be a significant barrier, because travel is considered to be part of the rural way of life. For example, farm women must travel to get to their off-farm work and with the decline of rural services women are frequently commuting for their basic goods and services.

Child Care

Women in both rural and urban centres frequently point out that the limited availability of child care is a major issue that needs to be addressed at the federal and provincial levels. In rural communities, this problem is exacerbated by the small number of services available. Women may face long travel distances to get to the nearest child-care provider. In some cases, local providers are already working at their full capacity. Many women in rural communities will use a variety of options to ensure their children are being cared for while away from home. Of the women involved in the study, nine women in agri-food and 12 women in forestry required child-care services at the time of the study. Women relied on their family members to help care for their children, including their mothers, grandparents,

siblings, older children and husband. One respondent felt this was the only way to go, because

Well it's not so much of a shock to her, she gets to stay with familiar faces and I know that my mother and I have the same morals and stuff like that and disciplinary skills and everything so it's not so different between this, that and the other thing.

Other women had friends and neighbours willing to watch their children. Few used “formal” methods of child care, such as day-care centres and private home day cares, likely due to the lack of formal day-care services in small communities and the inflexible hours offered by these organizations.

The majority of women were quick to point out the lack of child-care options available. One woman felt there were a limited number of quality child-care opportunities. She pointed out her concerns about the impact of her previous child-care provider on her children’s well-being,

I actually had a problem with my kids one time before they went into the day care, I just had them at a woman's [house], they weren't there for very long, and my oldest daughter had said that "I'm a little 'fer'" and things like that.

She further noted that while initially sympathetic, the employer had started to get impatient with her.

I was able to get Wednesday off for a while, but then it almost got to the point where, you know, hurry up and find other alternatives and quit using my kids as an excuse.

The limited range of hours offered by formal child-care providers was clearly an issue for the women working in both the agricultural and forestry industries where they frequently noted the inflexible day-care hours. The women working in the hog barns indicated the limited options available for their early morning work hours. As one respondent pointed out:

My boss's girlfriend has a little one, he's 3, and she works at one of the pig barns too and she has to get a woman from [a nearby town] to watch him. They were the only ones she could find that would watch that early in the morning, because we start at 6 a.m., so you have to be at the sitter by 5 a.m. And I know for a fact that they are not very impressed with her, but there is nothing else out there. Every other place starts at about 8 or 9 in the morning.

Other women from the agricultural industry spoke about how they worked their schedules around their husband’s or older children to ensure their child-care needs were being met.

I told them [the employer] I'd work weekends and evenings just so that we didn't have to have a baby-sitter and that was our biggest thing with the kids...he was home on weekends to look after the kids.

Other women discussed how they waited to go back into the work force until their children were old enough, simply because they could not afford the cost of child care and living expenses.

Women with young children in forestry expressed serious concerns about shift work and child care. One woman who quit said:

You almost have to have a live-in nanny, like the shift work, putting the kids on the bus, like being out in the country...it's just really really hard.

Trying to juggle child care and shifts was a particular challenge when there was no extended family or close friend who could provide child care at odd hours.

Pick up at 1 a.m. is hardly a feature most child-care facilities provide.

In some cases, women's partners were also shift workers; at some times, it was possible to work different shifts to juggle child-care responsibilities. At other times, this strategy was not possible. Women who were single parents had fewer options. Nevertheless, it was clear that trying to organize child care, school schedules, and other responsibilities could be viewed as a Herculean task. One woman interviewed left her job primarily because she could no longer juggle all the pieces required.

Clearly, limited child-care opportunities continue to be an important issue for women as it reduces their options for employment and affects their work hours, family life and their sense of well-being. One woman in forestry and one woman employed in the meat processing sector talked about the needs for better child-care options in their communities. The woman from the meat processing industry felt her employer should provide child care at the company so women with young children had a place to leave their children due to limited options available early in the morning and late at night. The women in forestry noted that child-care providers should be paid better to ensure quality care.

If companies are serious about increasing the numbers of women employees, they should work with unions to negotiate scheduling for women (and men) with home-care responsibilities and consider options for providing day care on site or nearby that could be used by other rural residents as well.

Work Enjoyment

Socializing with co-workers was the key reason many of the women from both industries enjoyed their jobs. They liked their co-workers, enjoyed working as a team and, in general, enjoyed being at work. One woman from forestry even complained that she did not like the coffee break times, because she could not share them with her friends. Other women in both forestry and agri-food liked their jobs, because their work was physical and allowed them to

remain fit. One woman employed in agri-food noted that she loved her work, because it empowered her physically, mentally and spiritually. She felt that it gave her confidence to be in the work force. Some of the women in forestry also noted how their work empowered them as they were able to control the work they were doing, they had a sense of pride in doing a good job and they enjoyed the responsibility.

Some women who worked in the hog barns liked the independence. They indicated that they did not have to deal with people and were not required to socialize. One woman noted that she liked working with pigs, because “they don’t talk back.” Another woman from the meat processing industry liked her job, because she felt it was less stressful compared to employment in the retail sector. The women employed at one meat processing company noted they enjoyed the wages and benefits as opposed to the working atmosphere or their co-workers. One woman enjoyed her co-workers as long as no one complained about their job. Women employed at another meat processor had a hard time finding reasons for disliking their job, saying they enjoyed the work, the flexibility of the company, the hours and working with clients and co-workers.

Additionally, the majority of women employed in the hog industry liked their jobs, because they were able to work with animals. One woman noted how much fun she has with the pigs.

You can go to work and like you could have had a flat tire on the way to work and it could be 50 below and you can just be nasty and cranky. But when you walk out there and watch those little guys bouncing and playing and [when] you pick one up and he gives you a kiss, you know it makes your day. Some days I just think “I get paid for this?” So that’s pretty good.

Women in the forestry industry liked their jobs for similar reasons but also because they viewed their work as interesting and challenging. They felt they had opportunities for change, excellent wages and benefits, and a positive work atmosphere. One woman noted that she enjoyed the diversity of the work force and the willingness to debate and talk. Another woman liked how her work was “hands on.”

I’m not an office person or really a university person. I just like operating equipment and there is so many different things that I can do out there...I am a hard worker, and I would rather use my hands and do something.

Alternatively, an office employee noted that she enjoyed her job, because she was able to interact with the public and crunch numbers, and was not at all interested in working on the floor.

A small number of women in forestry enjoyed shift work.

It works for me. I work four days on, four off, four nights, four off. I really enjoy it...and my kids are old enough so it’s not a concern for child care.

Women who liked working shifts said that working odd hours gave them more freedom during the week when they had time off and provided opportunities to build in extra holiday time. They also said they enjoyed working in the quiet times of the evening or night. Women working in the office on the other hand, noted how they enjoyed the regular work hours and the flexibility of the company to allow them to come later in the day or leave early if they needed it for child-care reasons.

While many women viewed their co-workers as a positive aspect of their work, some of the women in agri-food also noted that they did not like working with certain individuals, citing a series of conflicts they may have with their co-workers. One woman indicated that while she likes her co-workers she does not enjoy being confined in the barn all day.

You have your coffee breaks and your dinner breaks with the same eight or twenty or however many people work with you and that is mentally tiring for one thing...you can't distance yourself from the job. We work 11 day shifts there and then three days off and then five days and two days so by the time you get to day nine of that 11, everybody has fangs.

Women in the hog industry noted that they did not like the smell in the barns. These women often commented on how the smell would stay with them for hours after work.

Well I actually use dish soap and it helps in my hair, it takes away the smell. When summer time comes I'm all right, but if I don't do that, then when I get my hair wet, it's like stay the hell away from me.

Women in the hog barns and in the meat processing sector indicated that they did not like how they were constantly under pressure and did not like the stress to keep up the pace of the productivity level desired by the employer. Women in the meat processing sector additionally noted that they disliked the automation of the assembly line work, frequently discussing how repetitious, physically demanding and boring their work was. They felt that it did not allow them to think or have control over their working conditions.

It's just way, way too physically demanding. It's injuring. It's repetitious. It's boring. There's too much job control. We do not have any decision-making capabilities on the floor. Chasing machinery.

When women in forestry were asked what they disliked about their job, shift work was the most frequent response. The majority of women talked of the toll shift work took on their bodies, their family and community life. One woman, now off shifts, reported that after a 12-hour shift

I can't remember ever being so tired after working a night shift...when I think about it now, when [we] come out and drive home, [we] are actually impaired...I'm older, physically, I don't think I'd be up to it.

Women in their late 40s and 50s, in particular, described working shifts:

I'm [in my 50s] and I have arthritis in the knee so you know...it's hard on me physically...and then there's the shift work which...really isn't ideal but you know, it's a great job and the pay is really good...you know, you have to appreciate it.

Describing a rotating shift, one woman said:

I liked the work but after 18 months I couldn't sleep, because of that particular shift. I put in [to go] back in the office.

A human resources manager stated that as the work force gets older, shift work gets harder and the company receives more doctors' notes excusing workers from working shifts. There may be policy implications to this concern as the work force ages.

Women also indicated that shift work increased their isolation in the small towns.

I found it difficult to join the church choir or join anything that has a weekly commitment or a weekly attendance so I've had to kind of seek out other ways to feel more a part of the community.

Another woman who left the industry reported:

It was really isolating...because my friends didn't work shift and I wasn't friends with my crew...so it's quite isolating for single women.

In this sense, shift work may be more isolating than small town life or distance from home to work. Women in forestry also felt that they did not have a lot of workplace control.

The lack of any feeling of control over, you know, your life and what you're doing, which is very much just a cog in the wheel so that's...it's a job, it's still a good job, but it's still just a job. It doesn't feel like, like I don't have a passion for my job.

Five women also talked about how they disliked their managers and felt that their opinion was not valued at work. Some of the women also noted they felt their job was not secure, because of restructuring and didn't quite know where they fit.

Wages and Benefits

Wages

The women who worked in the hog industry noted that their employers provided better wages than other job opportunities in the community.

The money is the clincher here; it's good money.

As we have already discussed, women noted there were few other job options in their rural communities. Women in the hog industry also pointed out that for the level of education they

had, the wages they received were as good as they could get. They felt that if they wanted more money they would have to get a higher education and relocate to a larger centre.

The higher wages offered by the hog producers were viewed as an incentive by many of the women to work at the hog barns. One woman noted how appreciative she was of her wages.

Every little bit is appreciated and, like I've been down when there was just me and my kids and money was tight and so when I had a chance that paid better, I grabbed it.

The wage structure in the hog industry was not consistent. Some companies paid by the hour, whereas another paid by salary. One woman paid by salary noted that while she is making a decent wage, if she worked at another employer she would get paid more due to the hourly wage. However, because the employer she worked for had good benefits and a bonus system, she was satisfied with her income.

Depending on which hog company women worked for, they had an opportunity to make additional income through overtime or bonuses. Those who were paid hourly had the opportunity to work overtime, but only on the employer's approval. The women who worked on salary did not get overtime, but were able to take time off in lieu of overtime pay. These women were also able to collect monthly bonuses depending on how productive their barns were and how well they worked together as a team. Some women spoke of making up to an additional \$1,000 a month in bonuses.

Although women in the hog industry felt their wages were adequate, they often were dissatisfied with how the wages remained stagnant. Women noted that once they had all their necessary training and courses completed, they had no options for a wage increase with the exception of the yearly standard cost of living raise. One woman noted how those with a great deal of experience were not compensated appropriately.

I've been there for six years and somebody who has just started three months ago makes \$120 less than me. And to me, that's the only thing I don't agree with, because I've been there longer and have more experience than they do.

Whether women were satisfied with their wages in the meat processing sector depended on their employer. Some women were generally dissatisfied with the wages they received. One woman noted:

If they paid me more I would work harder.

She went on further:

I'm only making \$13,000. That's all I made last year, \$13,500 before deductions. I have to take out some RRSPs just to live.

Women employed at other meat processing companies were more satisfied. One woman noted that the union was instrumental in her higher wages, but still did not feel their wages were comparable to other plants in Canada. In the meat processing industry, three women noted a differential in wages between the men and the women.

They have the women doing the men's jobs, but they only pay us minimum wage.

They pointed out that if they were doing the same work as the men, it would only be fair to be paid the same amount.

Money was the primary motivation for women working in the forestry industry. Women were almost unanimous that their jobs were well paid, some women even suggested that they were overpaid. Wages for labourers between \$20 to \$30 an hour were considered "hard to match." Additionally, one woman documented her benefits that included

dental, glasses, sick leave...they pay if I go get a chiropractor, massage...My son is covered. You can't get any better than that, you know, it's very good. Holiday pay.

Some women described themselves as

leading the good life [able to] buy all the toys like the boats and quads and snowmobiles [and being able to travel]. I don't have to go to just North Battleford for a trip, I can leave the country.

Women also commented on the benefits for their families and communities of good wages. As one woman explained:

I can take holidays, afford to go on vacation, help my kids with university. I know the difference, I know what it feels to go from pay cheque to pay cheque and then having, not more than enough, but to be comfortable which is nice. I wish more women could get there.

Another woman explained that she was able to focus on volunteer work, because her job provided her with the basic necessities. In her words, getting well paid

gives my volunteer work more importance, because of the fact that I'm getting paid well, I'm getting benefits means I'm willing to stay with a job that's maybe not as mentally stimulating, maybe not as personally rewarding as other work that I would do, so I take that personal reward and I take [my] mental stimulation from other sources.

Although women in forestry noted that the wages overall were high, they did comment on differentials between office and production line workers as well as between salaried professional and waged workers. Office workers earned about \$10,000 per year less

than production line workers. This gap widened when pay increases were applied as a percentage of the base rate. Additionally, clerical workers typically did not get overtime or advancement opportunities provided to their production counterparts. Some women who worked in larger pulp and paper plants adjusted by toggling between production jobs and office jobs as this strategy provided more income than a clerical job and less shift work than a production job. This strategy gives pause to consider strategies for greater pay equity so women do not have to make such choices.

There is a large discrepancy between forestry and agri-food industry wages. In Saskatchewan in 2000, women in forestry made on average \$50,000 a year, whereas women in agriculture make on average less than \$10,000 a year.⁴ This discrepancy in wages is evident in the comments women made. A women in forestry noted:

What the bank recognizes is \$50,000 a year, but because of overtime we're on target for \$70,000.

Women working in the hog industry reported incomes averaging \$30,000 per year; however, there is also variability in the wages that women receive in the hog barns, depending on the size of the company, the structure of the wages (salary versus hourly wages) and the additional perquisites, such as bonuses. At the lower end of the income scale, a woman in meat processing noted that she only made \$13,000 in one year.

Benefits

Women working full time in the agri-food and forestry sectors were very satisfied with their benefit packages. In general, the women received a private pension plan, family personal days, bereavement leave, extended medical and dental, and maternity/paternity leave.

In the hog industry, there were variations in the benefits women received. Two hog producers provided sick leave benefits, whereas the other did not. One woman noted the problem of not having sick leave.

I was sick for about four hours straight, I was throwing up and I just couldn't get to work. You feel bad, because it's a holiday and it made my cheque a little smaller, but what are you going to do. Like if you had sick leave you would have something covering you. Some people just can't afford to be sick.

Another woman noted that sick leave was offered at one time, but she reported that the program was cancelled, because the employees took advantage of it. Shift workers in the forestry industry and women working in the meat processing sector also indicated they did not receive sick days. Women from both industries noted they had to use their holidays to compensate for the time they were not there. Nearly all the women who did not have sick leave indicated that sick days would be valuable.

The benefit package offered by one of the hog employers had additional benefits that could be viewed as family friendly. The additional benefits offered by this employer included a full hog every year benefit (half a hog every six months), a \$75 clothing allowance (for

work purposes), tours of local businesses, an opportunity to purchase company shares and a monthly bonus payment. In forestry, some of the additional benefits included gym memberships, payment of tuition for educational programs and professional certification.

Women in forestry would like to see additional benefits including 55 percent of wages covered under maternity leave, an increase in the retirement package to cover cost of living, 100 percent dental coverage, and better vision care. Women in the meat processing sector noted that they would like to have a short-term disability package available due to the injuries that can occur at work. One woman in forestry and one woman in meat processing indicated they would like to see a company-sponsored or owned day care for women with children.

Advancement

A large number of women who worked in the hog barns commented that if they were interested in becoming a barn manager, they had the opportunity as long as they took the appropriate management courses. The employers in the hog barns also noted, that to advance one would require a certain amount of experience as well as training. In general, the women felt they had equal opportunities compared to men, frequently citing the number of women that were advancing at many of the hog barns. Women did note that if they wanted to be a manager they had to be willing to relocate.

The problem is, is that you have to be mobile; you would have to be able to move then.

Another respondent indicated that the highest they could go was barn management; after that they could not advance any further.

Some agri-food respondents felt confident they would be able to move up into office positions, particularly if they were at their jobs long enough, or if they got the appropriate education. One respondent had been employed in the hog industry for 10 years. She spoke of how she was gradually promoted in various stages, starting as a labourer in the hog barns and ending up as a manager. Another woman spoke of being promoted to some degree as she took on the head accountant's role, while not necessarily taking the title. Interestingly, women working in the agri-food industry frequently commented that moving into administrative positions was a form of advancement; however, women in forestry felt that moving from administrative positions to labourers was an advancement, because of the higher pay.

In forestry and meat processing, women had mixed feelings about their opportunities to advance within management or to other higher positions. Some women noted that advancement depended on their seniority level, and if they were interested in a particular position they had to bid for the jobs. The women in forestry also frequently noted that they had to wait until people retired or quit to advance in a different position. Advancement was also based on their willingness to relocate elsewhere.

Yeah, I could have [advanced]. I could have applied, but it wouldn't have been here. The head guy for...health and safety sent me an e-mail that wanted to know if I wanted to apply for a health and safety co-ordinator job in the United States.

A few other women indicated they often did not apply for bid positions, because they felt they did not have the physical capability to do the job.

One woman from the hog barns and three women from forestry commented that they had the opportunity for promotion, but felt their family and young children limited their availability for such work.

No, I think they are definitely looking for women to move into the managerial role, or to the higher level roles, but the point is I guess...having little kids, and if I have to work a long day it's not my hubby who figures out who's going to pick up the kids.

Many women in both the agri-food and forestry industry spoke about not being interested in promotion, either because they did not want the responsibility or did not want to work with certain individuals. A woman from the meat processing industry indicated she could advance into one of the men's position but was not interested.

I have the opportunity now to switch over if I want to. But being the only woman, there's no other women doing that de-boning, so I would be the only one working with these guys. I know these guys already, so I'm not too interested in working with them.

Another woman employed in meat processing felt that if she took a management position, she would no longer have job security, because she would lose the protection of the union. Some of the women in forestry were not interested in advancement due to fear or self-confidence issues, believing they were not able to do those particular jobs.

I don't feel as competent here as I did there, because I have only been here for a year. Besides that, I think I'm probably getting older and not as strong as I was five years ago; [that] kind of swayed me away from millwright work.

In forestry, seniority aids advancement as employees with seniority can bid for higher positions. Some women noted that a number of men were advancing up into higher positions as opposed to women, because they had been working at the mill longer.

There's the seniority factor, so somebody who is 55 and retiring at 60...and a lot of guys will go and do this...use their seniority.

Furthermore, younger women in their late 20s and early 30s have felt unable to advance, especially in trades, even though they were better qualified for the positions.

Women in forestry and agri-food both noted that gender discrimination was the primary reason they were not able to advance in the company. One woman from the hog barns commented:

I just always get the feeling that they [the company] would rather have a man at top in management or assistant management position versus a woman. They had a woman in our barn before this guy took over and who didn't leave in good terms.

However, women in agri-food more often felt they had equal opportunities compared to males for advancement opportunities.

The women in the forestry industry voiced similar concerns, suggesting that management did not want women in upper management, supervisory positions or jobs described as “men’s work,” because women were not physically suited for the job or because they simply preferred men. As one respondent noted:

Say what you will, I mean one guy that was there, he was second in command and he said, quite honestly, “I am not used to women in mills.”

Women in forestry particularly feel as if they have to prove themselves in the workplace on a day-to-day basis to break perceptions of women with “power.”

There's a wonderful book I love, and I keep telling all the men in my life I'm gonna send them a copy. It's called how to succeed in business without a penis. Men are expected to climb the ladder...are brave and bold and everything, whereas women, if a woman is brave and bold she's considered a bitch...and it's a perception, and women are slowly breaking that barrier proving that you know...we can stand up to the plate.

Education Opportunities

Women in the agri-food industry frequently noted the number of educational programs available to them if they were interested. These opportunities were even more readily available to the women working in the hog industry. With rapid changes in the intensive livestock industry, the hog industry has become more involved in the training of staff. Companies focus on the needs of livestock including nutrition, breeding, health and even minor veterinarian medicine. One hog employer involved in the research designed a pork technician course with the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST) and made it mandatory for all employees. The program consists of four levels, two of which are mandatory. Level one consists of basic training in the barn, level two consists of course work and learning why they do things, level three is designed for those who wish to specialize in a particular area (i.e., breeding) and level four is management courses.

Many of the women involved in this education program noted the positive benefits.

I started out as a farrowing tech, so when I started in nursery I really didn't know anything. So this has been a fabulous way to learn and it's been easy too.

However, not all the women were interested in the program and some were reluctant to do the courses.

I have no interest in taking management courses or level 1, 2 or 3 or whatever all those are. Me and the ladies said no, if they want us to do that we'll quit. And I said, I can't quit, but I don't want to do that stuff with my life the way it is right now, go study something and knowing that I may fail...but maybe I wouldn't [fail].

Other women noted they did not always have the time to attend courses due to child-care reasons and family farm commitments. Some of them even felt the travel to school would have been prohibitive. To encourage employees, the company offered incentives, such as a \$100 pay raise for the successful completion of each level. Even with the incentive in place, some women were still uninterested.

The other hog production companies involved in the study offered their employees the opportunity to attend courses if they desired.

If I wanted to go and take a computer class or something. They're very pro-education like [for] all the staff, there's lots of training programs. It is available.

One woman indicated that she was too afraid to take advantage of the educational opportunities available.

All I have to say is, I want to go. The biggest thing is I don't always want to. It's going farther away and I'm a bit chicken when it comes to travelling on my own.

Women employed at the meat processing firms also pointed out that they had opportunities to take educational courses.

I guess a meat cutter could probably go to school and take meat cutting and then come back and be a meat cutter.

The majority of programs and training however, were offered in-house such as sanitation and health and safety.

Clerical workers were offered a number of computer training courses. Women involved in accounting positions also noted they could take further training to enhance their accounting skills. One woman from the meat processing sector commented that her employer had a company policy of paying for post-secondary education in either university or SIAST as

long as those taking that opportunity make a commitment to work at the plant. Interestingly, two women in forestry mentioned that their union offered a course specifically designed for women, but were unfamiliar with what the program offered. A small number of women were unaware of whether their employer provided educational/training opportunities and some indicated training was on the job.

Training, promotion and advancement were tricky issues for women in forestry jobs. Women wanted to see other women in a greater variety of positions where they could act as role models, encouraging greater diversity.

Most of our managers are still men...I can't say [a woman supervisor] would be a lot better, but you'd feel like the opportunity was there, because you would see it and it would be visible.

However, women who had access to the training and to serve as role models had mixed feelings. They felt pressured by the company to move into higher positions, but they did not want to make the commitment, because of the demands that might result or because the logistics of training were too difficult to arrange.

In general, forestry companies were rated highly for the training opportunities available to workers. These opportunities ranged from basic high school, office skills, trades and technical to time off and subsidies to take university programs. Yet, for some women, it was difficult to undertake these courses, particularly if they required travel. This situation arose for a woman whose partner also worked shift work. She found that between his shifts, child-care needs and school schedules, it was very hard to make arrangements, even for short periods of two to three days. If companies wish women to move into new positions, they might have to consider incentives for training that also include child care or, if partners work in the same firm, for partners to take time off as well so that they can provide care.

Health and Safety

Safety

Resource industries are not always safe places to work. If good training practices and policies are in place, the number of workplace injuries can decline significantly. In the hog industry, women work daily with hogs that can weigh up to 270 kilograms. They work in confined spaces and must always be aware of hydrogen sulphide levels in the barns. Women in the meat processing sector work with animal carcasses, knives and other sharp objects, and women working in the forestry industry are working around large machinery, heavy-duty equipment and dangerous chemicals.

Nearly all the women in the forestry and hog industry felt their workplace was relatively safe. Women from both industries also noted that while their work was safe, they were also employed in industries where workplace hazards were common. As one woman in forestry commented:

Any mill that you work in is a dangerous environment.

Unions in the forestry industry have been instrumental in the regulations and training requirements to help ensure safe work practices in the industry. The level of safety in the forestry industry is evident in the statistics from the Saskatchewan Workers Compensation Board (2003). In 2003, only one percent of employees in the pulp and paper mills and four percent working in the planing, saw mills and waferboard mills required time off due to injuries. In the hog industry, new government labour laws, public perception and the desire to find employees have been influential in the advancements of health and safety in the hog barns.

A few women from the hog industry did comment on infrastructure problems that were a source of concern.

Like there's stuff that they should get fixed, but they don't.

Other concerns identified by women working in the hog barns included lifting heavy objects, being present around hydrogen sulphide gas, handling livestock, working under pressure and being understaffed.

A range of safety issues were also described by women in forestry. Women described dangers associated with heat, dust, smell, chemicals, hearing loss, as well as injuries (e.g., cuts, loss of body parts, back and knee injuries), tendonitis, repetitive motion injuries, as well as ergonomic injuries most commonly (although not exclusively) associated with office jobs. Some women in forestry also indicated their concerns arising from downsizing and working under pressure.

They talk about safety...but they sure are not thinking about it when they're trying to cut back people and only have one person in that area operating machinery. Anything can happen and who is going to find this person.

Women employed at two meat processing companies did not always feel safe in their work environment.

There's too many dangerous objects. That place is an obstacle course. It's...buildings all joined in. There's steps where there shouldn't be steps. And to get stock you have to climb up a stepladder. That's not safe, they're not joined, they're not sturdy. The whole thing is dangerous.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) indicated that the meat processing sector is the second most dangerous occupation in the world due to the nature of the work and the handling of safety issues by employers (Tomoda 2000). Statistics of workers' injury rates from the Saskatchewan Workers Compensation Board (2004) confirmed this finding, where in 2003, 30.05 percent of workers were injured and required time off, second only to conventional logging, which reported injury rates of 30.89 percent. Employees are exposed to cold conditions to reduce bacterial contamination of food, slippery floors from animal fat and water from washing equipment, sharp knives that can pierce the body, cement floors that are hard on the feet and legs, and repetitive strain injuries from doing the same task

over and over again (Tomoda 2000). Increasing pressure to work faster and to keep up with assembly line rates result in higher rates of injury and repetitive strain injuries. Women working at some meat processing companies noted that these were problems at their workplace, often talking about cold and wet working conditions, pressure to keep up with the assembly line and injuries, such as sliced hands or cut fingers. One woman talked candidly about her former employer's handling of injuries and repetitive strain. She noted that her employer had medical personnel, but felt that the care was inappropriate.

There were times that they gave me [Tylenol 3] and sent me back on the floor, and by policy you're not supposed to be on the floor if you're on [Tylenol 3]. But they put me on them and then put me back on the floor. That was when my shoulder was getting really, really bad.

These findings are not a surprise as other researchers noted similar safety issues and observed that health and safety have lower priority for meat processing companies due to their concerns about productivity and making a profit (MacLachlan 2001; Griffith et al. 1995). This issue is compounded by employees continuing work in unsafe conditions and breaking policy rules, due to threats or concerns of losing their job, because of low productivity rates or having too many absent days.

Safety Policy

The majority of women from forestry and agri-food indicated their employers had safety policies. Most of the women from forestry and from the hog industry were satisfied with the policies. However, some labourers in both industries did discuss their concerns about particular policies and procedures. In meat processing, the women indicated the presence of policies, where one woman described them as "lovely policies" that were frequently not followed.

Forestry companies all had health and safety policies they reinforced through paid training sessions, safety officers and inspectors, and regular meetings. One woman reported:

We have monthly toolbox meetings which is ...like WHMIS [Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System], ergonomics, confined space, emergency procedures, hearing conservation...power saw training. People just sign up if they want to come. And [the company] pays for it and you even get paid your time or overtime.

Nevertheless, women reported tension between high safety standards and policies and individual demands to meet production targets.

Lots of people take lots of risks, personal risks that the company would have been horrified to know about.

They reported feeling pressured in their production crews to meet targets or exceed production levels achieved by crews on other shifts. Often, this meant individuals took

risks that might not be consistent with the policies set for health and safety. Ongoing education and enforcement around safety issues appears warranted.

In the hog industry, recent changes to worker safety included wearing safety gear (dust masks, goggles and ear protection) and the appointment of health and safety representatives in each barn. In both forestry and agri-food, occupational health and safety representatives are there to ensure that workers concerns are brought forward to the company. Regular meetings are held where employees can voice their concerns, discuss maintenance issues, obtain training courses and have discussions on new policies and procedures. Some women in the hog barns have resisted the new policy requiring dust masks. They were of the opinion that these masks were even more detrimental than not wearing the dust masks.

Women working in the meat processing sector noted that safety policies were not always followed to increase productivity rates or because they were understaffed. Women also noted safety violations and how they were sometimes encouraged by floor supervisors to increase productivity. The high rates of workplace injury in the agri-food industry and the concerns of the women working in that industry suggest that more aggressive corporate programs and government regulations are needed to ensure safety standards are being upheld.

Safety Training

The women in the forestry and hog industries were quite aware of the various safety training courses available. In the hog industry, employees working in the hog barns and labs said they were trained in the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS), Canadian Quality Assurance (CQA), hydrogen sulphide training and first aid. Safety training in the forestry industry included WHMIS, ergonomics, emergency procedures, hearing conservation, first aid, confined space training, equipment training, machine lockout, health and wellness, and industrial hygiene. Many women in forestry indicated they had very good training programs available; however, some felt they were not provided with enough training when first hired. Three women employed in the hog barns stated they wanted updates on particular training programs, particularly emergency protocols and hydrogen sulphide procedures arguing that being trained only once was not adequate for them to remember the information longer than a year.

However, women employed at one of the meat processing companies were not aware of any safety training courses available to them. They indicated they were not offered the appropriate training or safety training necessary for them to be doing particular tasks. One woman noted her concern about the inappropriate ways of training.

The manager...she just demonstrated cutting a pig and showing the kids and what not. She got carried away and just cut that right off [shows thumb] by that ligament there...she should have known better.

Women employed at the other processing companies did state they were given one week of training before they started work and were provided updated training opportunities for

WHIMIS and in food safety handling as well as having frequent occupational health and safety meetings.

Health

Whether employees viewed their workplace as healthy differed between the women working in the agri-food sector and the women working in the forestry industry. This difference was also marked between women working in the office as opposed to the labourers.

Women in the hog sector spoke frequently of poor air quality.

I wouldn't say extremely healthy, no, because of all the dust and I mean there are gases and stuff.

One woman noted how her allergies become exaggerated from working in the barns.

Every barn I worked in...I'd break out in rashes, my hands get really rashie...I'm allergic to the pigs, the feed and the dust.

Three other women spoke of how some people had to quit working due to breathing problems, such as asthma. Some of these women also spoke of how the quality of air varied seasonally.

In the summer yeah, but in the winter time you get lots of ammonia smell. In the winter there aren't as many fans running because they have to keep it at a certain level of warmth, but the ammonia gets really bad.

Another talked about how the heat in the barns becomes almost unbearable in the summer. Other studies that examine the health of workers in hog barns noted similar findings, where employees experience a high level of respiratory illness, because of exposure to hog dust and gases within a confined area. The studies also note that workers with lower immune systems will be “weeded out,” because of the development of asthma and allergies to the pigs and feed (Hurley et al. 2000). Due to these concerns, hog barns have made dust masks mandatory; however, as mentioned earlier, some women were not convinced they were necessary indicating that more discussion is required about health risks.

Three women also brought up their concerns related to injecting pigs with certain drugs. In the hog industry, drugs are used to induce heat, labour, prevent diarrhea etc. One woman spoke of how she felt that hormonal drugs should only be handled by men.

A woman who is pregnant could abort, a woman who, let's say is menopausal could all of a sudden start cycling again...and everybody that works with pigs has probably given themselves a needle by accident, so there should be legislation that these drugs should only be administered by men.

Another woman pointed out that if a woman was pregnant, she would not be allowed to handle the injections. However, women often don't know they are pregnant, especially

during the first few weeks. She further noted that she was not fully aware of what would happen to her if she did accidentally inject herself, or what she should do if she did. She felt that the employers should provide more discussion about the drugs used and they should stress taking precautions when administering them.

Women working in the meat processing sector spoke often of always working in wet, cold and/or warm conditions. In all meat industries, the packaging department is kept cold to prevent the development of diseases to ensure the public is kept safe. Those involved in the kill line are exposed to warm and wet conditions. Running water is used to keep the machinery, hands and knives clean. However, these conditions do take a toll on the employees who work at these jobs. Two women discussed how they were always sick at work, because they were always working in cold and wet conditions.

I have never been so sick as what I have been since I started there. But that is because I am working in moisture and warmth and cold all the time.

The International Labour Organization also noted that employees working at meat processing companies are also exposed to a range of health concerns (Tomoda 2000). As noted previously, employees are exposed to a number of diseases. One woman confirmed this finding by discussing the types of diseases workers are exposed to on a day-to-day basis.

We have a lot of problems with our new people that are just recruited...they will pick up diseases like lysteria, campylobacter, samonella...usually they have what is known as the rookie flu.

In forestry, only three women felt their workplace was unhealthy. They cited similar conditions as women in the hog barns, including dust and gases in the air as well as repetitive motion injuries. Clerical workers in forestry also felt their workplace was healthy stating their employers provided ergonomically correct chairs and computer equipment to prevent carpal tunnel syndrome. One woman who had been employed in the hog industry felt her employer could have done more to prevent carpal tunnel in the offices, and stated that she had left her employment, because of back and neck strain.

Workplace Relationships

The companies involved in the study had policies and training aimed at addressing harassment and discrimination. Even though these policies exist, some women involved did describe occurrences of harassment and discrimination. Types of harassment mentioned included gender discrimination, sexual harassment, verbal harassment and being treated poorly by management. A small number of women in forestry and agri-food mentioned instances of gender discrimination. The women in forestry often felt these comments were made by men who felt threatened by their presence.

I think they were just kind of threatened that women were actually coming out there and working with the guys.

Women in agri-food described comments that implied that because they were women they could not do the work.

One of my co-workers is an elderly fellow and he just makes remarks all the time. Yesterday was day 10 and I had enough and just asked him point blank why he has to be so ignorant. He said "I'm not ignorant, you're female."

Sexual harassment was not widely disclosed by women working in agri-food; however, some women did note cases that warrant recognition. Sexual harassment that women experienced consisted of sexual relations with management, inappropriate proposals and questions about their sexual activity. Unfortunately, in each case the women felt reluctant to bring the issue up with a manager and/or supervisor. While efforts are being made to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace, a greater emphasis is needed to provide a place where women feel safe in approaching a superior about their experience without feeling concerned about their job security.

Harassment by management was also reported by women in the agri-food industry. Some women felt they were targeted by their managers and felt threatened that they would lose their job. One woman discussed how her manager called her at home and accused her of skipping work when she took time off for health reasons and another woman discussed how her manager tried to force her from her job by overworking her.

When the boss...started I was like dirt. I really was and I don't know if it was because of my sex or because of my age or because of my last name. I don't know which one it was, or maybe he just didn't like me. I don't know...I remember...he was very, very close to firing me just because he would put on such a workload for myself specifically that it was impossible for me to do it in an eight-hour day.

When harassment in the workplace occurred, the women usually handled the situation themselves either by ignoring it or by confronting the problem. Some women noted that they had approached their manager or human resource officer about their problem; however, in cases where they felt harassed by the manager, the women reported they tried to ignore the situation.

Women in the hog industry noted that their employer had a zero tolerance on serious harassment cases. They indicated that their human resource manager frequently went to the barns to discuss harassment and discrimination, provided examples about what harassment is and the consequences of such behaviour. Women in forestry also indicated they were trained about harassment and were provided manuals on such behaviour. In the agri-food industry, particularly the hog sector, policies on harassment are more recent due to the newness, the smaller size and family ownership of many of the companies.

For the most part, women in the agri-food industry stated they had a positive working relationship with their co-workers. However, many of the women also noted that, at times,

they had very poor relationships with others. They often had conflicts as a result of different personalities and lifestyles, having perceptions that people were not sharing their workload, being stressed at their workplace, and working in a confined area together. A few of the women noted they hated the gossip and one felt quite concerned that it would be directed at her.

It's never been aimed toward me, [but] I guess I have no idea when I walk out of the room.

Women also noted forms of competition that existed at their work. Sometimes, the competition was friendly and fostered higher rates of productivity.

It's a healthy competition. You know the manager has put things on the big white boards, just our numbers, like a conception rate or a farrowing rate...and you see how the other barns are doing and it really affects people.

Other times competition was not so friendly and developed hard feelings between people. In one company in the meat processing sector the colour of peoples' hats indicated where people fit in the "chain of command." This often targeted particular groups, such as union leaders and management. A few of the women noted how this created a stressful atmosphere at the workplace, because of the animosity that existed between the union and management.

Many women in forestry reported enjoying working with their colleagues. Nevertheless, there are many elements of work atmosphere that make it challenging for women. Women in all occupations described the work atmosphere as largely male dominated. Waged, clerical and professional workers described the industry as containing a large number of older, male workers who still did not always feel comfortable with "women on the line." Foresters were described as being members of an old boys club while labourers were described as dinosaurs. A lack of welcoming atmosphere for women reinforced, for some, their feelings of inadequacy, and for others, a determination to prove themselves.

Outright harassment appears rare in the forestry work force today. Although they reported historical incidents, women reported that companies now have policies in place to deal with harassment.

It's posted all over the place, and if you were to tell somebody, one of the leaders, it's dealt with right away...everybody knows that.

We do not tolerate harassment; we do not tolerate abuse about anything; we don't expect people to be subjected to it; we don't expect people to subject other people to it.

Thus, outright harassment was reported as a thing of the past in forestry. Some women recalled first coming to the job site and having to deal with pornographic images of women at work stations or in public use areas like the lunchroom. These overt activities have largely been addressed. Nevertheless, women still had to address open criticism of their work

that they believed originated in their gender, sexist stories or jokes on the job site, and inappropriate language by male colleagues. Most of these concerns were directed toward men described as “the older guys.” Some women responded by “giving it back just as much,” and “standing our ground.” Others attempted to gain respect by dealing with the issues one-by-one in a quiet and respectful manner. Others simply accepted these activities as part of working in a male-dominated work environment.

Arguably, more difficult to address, were more subtle ways in which women continued to have to prove themselves or work harder to justify their presence in the male-dominated work environment. Women working in offices and with the public found they sometimes experienced more challenges with male clients rather than co-workers. More than one woman reported she wasn’t taken seriously by clients. Interestingly, in these cases, the women were publicly backed up by their male supervisors. In one case, however, the woman reflected:

You don’t know whether it was because I was a woman or because I was Native or a clerk.

Women reported feeling like they were not being taken seriously in the workplace. For example, one woman said:

You’ll call for a planer man and no one will answer.

Another reported:

It’s a challenge you feel that being a woman that you’re not heard, they might listen but they don’t hear you.

A third stated:

Some people aren’t really comfortable working with women in a setting like that.

When asked how they let her know there were uncomfortable with it, she said:

Oh, they ignore you, you know or just kind of don’t involve you with the [job]...as they would another male.

The issue of not being heard is subtle, but it has significant implications for women’s opportunities for training and advancement and for their prospects of improving the quality of their work experience. The concern that men get training opportunities and promotions over women based on their positive social relations with co-workers was expressed among the women interviewed. This issue is addressed in a following section.

Working with Livestock

Women working in the hog barns are responsible for the lives of animals, and find this work both rewarding and emotionally challenging. Some of the women stated that working in the hog barns was an alternative to going to university or technical school.

I've always liked animals and I guess, the other thing I wanted to become was a vet, but I didn't want to go to school for that many years, so [this] was the next closest thing.

Women would speak animatedly about the personalities of pigs.

They know what time of day it is and they'll stand up and they'll stick their nose out through the front of the bars and they want their nose scratched, or you'll stick your fingers in their mouth and they chuckle and talk to you.

Women in the hog barns get a great deal of satisfaction working with the animals and keeping them healthy.

You get a real satisfaction on seeing a big litter born that you keep alive...even taking skinny babies out of different pens and putting them all in one pen and see if you can bring them back instead of having to kill them, cause they push that quite a bit...I like to take those [piglets] and give them a lot of TLC [tender loving care] and see if I can't get them back. And usually you can and that's kind of neat. I enjoy that. Some of those little guys after a month or so, you would never know they were sick. They were thin like and they just gain, but you have to do it right. I enjoy that.

A few of the women made references to caring for animals in a hospital like fashion, highlighting their desire to protect and nurture the animals. However, caring for the animals also took an emotional toll on some of the women when they were required to put animals down if they were sick or severely injured.

I do it every day, because there is some that just don't make it or the mom gets them squished and hurts them and they are beyond hope...I mean I just have to shut that part of my brain off...it's just something I would rather not have to do.

One woman even spoke about kidnapping pigs and placing them in incubators to prevent them from being put down by other co-workers.

Perhaps the most controversial aspect of the hog barns has been the welfare of the animals. Responding to public perception and pressure, hog producers have established policies of zero tolerance regarding animal abuse. One employer noted:

We have zero tolerance for animal abuse; that's our livelihood, so we're not going to tolerate that. We have disciplinary codes. It's disciplinary code D,

after an investigation and depending on what happened, you would either be suspended with no pay or you would be terminated.

Despite the presence of these policies, a few of the women noted the presence of animal abuse.

I've worked with people that have been out and out cruel with pigs and thankfully I've always had the ability to go to somebody else... to let my concerns be known.

A few of the women even spoke of their concerns toward poor infrastructure and the impacts it had on the animals. The care of hogs and the maintenance of hog barns are the responsibility of individual managers, and the conditions in barns vary from one barn to another. One hog employer noted that the head office created an animal welfare committee to do ad hoc visits to ensure infrastructure and behaviour were up to code. However, this does not always prevent abuse and poor conditions, as the managers and employees do not always voice their concerns.

While not specifically mentioned by the employers, women often felt that their employers were increasingly hiring women in the nursery and farrowing departments, because women are perceived to be less likely to abuse the animals. However, one woman quickly noted that one female colleague did not fit the traditional gentle nurturing image, but was, in fact, very abusive toward the animals.

Impact of Work on Women's Personal Lives

In the forest industry, shift work was an issue for many women, especially those with children. Women found they had to organize their lives around their shifts, when working a 12-hour shift. Some single women found this offered them lots of time off which could be used to travel or visit family; although others noted that their friends were usually not off at the same time and this was isolating particularly for a single woman. Many women mentioned the difficulty of getting involved in organized activities, such as sports, church groups, and community activities that have a regular schedule. Shift work was very difficult for women with young children who noted the difficulty of either working or needing to sleep when their children wanted their attention. They also mentioned not being able to do things with their family, not being able to attend school functions or help out in the classroom, the difficulty in arranging child care and juggling work and children's activities. One woman

couldn't remember ever being so tired [as] after working a night shift.

Women stated that the work life gets set to a schedule and that you really have to juggle.

In the forest industry, many women noted the positive impact of making good wages. It offered them the opportunity to travel, to have more experiences, to take their families on vacation, pay for their children's education and to have

all the toys like the boats, and the quads and snowmobiles.

They recognize that there is a trade-off between making good money and not being able to do the things they want with their families.

One woman working in a professional position noted that in a small town, her social life was affected as there is a distinction drawn between union and management, which limit, the people she spends time with and creates uncomfortable situations.

Many women in the hog industry related that some of their days were exhausting. This is particularly the case where the women are older, have young children or are also part of farm families.

Everything is just overwhelming, like with the farm, working full time and having young kids, that's like three full-time jobs right there.

It's tough when you have little kids, a very hard, physically draining job when you have family to come home to, because your day doesn't end.

Many women stated that their jobs came first and everything else was scheduled around that. There are a variety of shifts worked in the different workplaces in the agri-food industry and women with early shifts liked getting off early enough in the day to spend time with their children, their husbands or to go to activities even though it means some of them get up at 4 a.m.

Women working evening shifts complained that they have no social life and can't be involved in sports teams, although two women were pleased that this gave them three-day weekends when they could go and visit family, go camping or go to events. Women working weekends found it interfered with their family life. Women also talked about housework having to wait until the end of the day or the weekend or just leaving the housework in favour of spending time with their children.

Just as in the forest industry, women in the hog industry noted they made good money. A few of the single women mentioned they were able to save money and one felt she could live well if she was alone. In the hog industry, one woman stated that if her spouse was working, she wouldn't be able to as they only had one car and

it would be too expensive to get a baby-sitter.

Another couple both worked in the same barn; the woman explained that due to bio-security, they cannot work at different barns. All the women reported they had the support of their partners for their current employment, although one partner was not supportive at first, but is supportive now that he knows more about her work.

Challenges in Retaining Work

Women in forestry felt they had more challenges in retaining their employment than women in agri-food. Challenges for women included aging, health concerns, family responsibilities

and keeping up with industry change and learning new things. Women in forestry additionally noted the stress of shift work, self-confidence issues and industry cutbacks.

Age was a concern for women 40 to 60 years of age as they were not sure if they could keep up with the physical aspects of the job.

As I get older I probably...know I can't keep the pace up. I wouldn't do this when I am 60, it's hard...it's hard heavy work.

One woman in forestry noted that shift work was increasingly becoming more difficult.

The shift work, 12-hour shifts, I can't remember ever being so tired after working a night shift.

Two women working in the hog barns felt that working conditions combined with age and physical capability were affecting their ability to keep their job.

As long as my knees don't give out or something, because you're constantly on cement floors and I'm not young anymore. I figure if I do another five or ten years, I will have done well.

One woman in forestry spoke of how she wished the company she worked for would have more flexibility so she would not have to work as hard until she retired.

I wish they did have part time, especially when you are winding down like I am.

Health was also a significant issue for women working in both industries. Women in forestry noted that their physical health was a concern, as they were getting older. One woman spoke of how injuries affect her work and her desire to be there.

My hands sometimes swell and they'll go numb and my elbows, they get all swollen up and my back aches. I go to the therapist and she comes and she works one once a week for five minutes...there are days when you are in so much pain you just, you know. I keep thinking, oh I can't do this anymore, I've got to quit.

Women working in the meat processing sector noted how the cold, wet and repetitive working conditions also made it difficult to maintain their working ability.

Being in between, wet all day, cement floors. Some repetitive strain injures, the big "art" is starting to visit, so if your arthritis acts up, there is going to be even more health issues [to deal with].

Individuals with poor pulmonary functions and weaker immune systems were less likely to stay working in a hog barn, due to the presence of gases and hog dust.

Family commitments can be a significant barrier for women retaining their work, either because they feel overworked and stressed by having many commitments or feel guilty, because they are not spending enough time with their children. As one woman noted:

I think the women in families do most of keeping the home running, children, homework, evening activities, running the day-to-day things. If they're doing the majority of it, whether it's 50 percent, 75 percent whatever, you still have to fit that in.

The younger women working in the forestry sector often brought up family and child-care needs as a potential barrier in keeping their work. Women frequently brought up their concerns of working full time, dealing with shift work and not being home with their children. One woman felt that, if she did not make such a good income, she would have quit

after I had my second daughter while I was working there, it broke my heart to go back to work and leave this baby with a baby-sitter and all this. At that point, if I could have quit I would have quit then.

Doing shift work and being on call are especially difficult for women trying to manage their job and care for young children.

Sometimes I would get called in at midnights, so I would have to get him up, dress him and listen to him screaming and hollering to take him to town.

Another woman spoke of feeling guilty about enjoying her job and not being home for her children.

I am mostly torn, I think, I guess between my family and work. Like I enjoy my work, but I also want to be home for my kids when they grow, and so that way I'm quite torn.

A small number of women working in forestry also noted how living in a small rural community was a barrier as they could not enjoy the social life of the city. A professional woman noted how she was staying at her current employment until she gained enough experience to obtain a job in a larger centre. This can be a significant barrier for agri-food industries to attract and retain professionals to rural areas.

Women in both the hog and forestry industries mentioned that changes in procedures and equipment were challenging.

You know, the challenges to keep up with the change. We're just bombarded with never ending change. Whether it's just you know, trying to meet the mill needs or just...rules, regulations, guidelines, policies, procedures, new systems on how we do things, we spend like hours learning new programs, that type of thing.

In the meat processing industry, pressure from the employers has been an issue to keep up with demands for faster production.

It's because they are more demanding on you now. You have to get that product out and get it out now and you know it had to be done fast and faster you know...to stay competitive you have to get the work done faster.

Company layoffs, cutbacks and industry restructuring were on the minds of nearly all the women who were interviewed in the forestry industry. One forestry company was restructuring to become more efficient. The company reported having recently reduced the number of employees through advanced retirement from 800 to 600 employees. However, more lay offs will likely occur and this downsizing will probably have implications on women working in the mills. It was reported that

approximately five years ago there was about 1,000 employees out there and when this is all said and done by the end of 2005, there's going to be about 500 people.

Lay offs will be based on seniority status, those with more seniority will be protected while those with less seniority will be let go.

Last March, we had huge government cutbacks and I hear there is more to come. I've got two and half years seniority in a department where most people have 20 or 30. Luckily I'm at a high enough level, as there are only so many people that can bump me out.

However, most women and minority groups do not have high seniority status compared to many of the men, so their chances of staying are reduced.

Finding Another Job

The majority of women working in forestry and agri-food indicated they would go out and find another job if they had lost their current employment. All the women in agri-food and some of the women in forestry indicated they would take any kind of job to survive.

I would do whatever...if someone needed somebody to clean up a building, smash it down and demolish it, I would do that. If someone needed me to take care of their baby, their mom, their grandfather I would be there caring for somebody. If they needed something done, whatever they needed, I would do it.

Women in forestry indicated they would find a job in the field in which they obtained their education, even if they had to take a pay cut.

Most of the women working in the hog industry were optimistic they would not have a problem finding another job.

I would just go and get another job, because there is always one out there, that wouldn't be a problem. And if I didn't like it, I mean I may have to work a job and a half just to make the kind of money I've got.

Whereas the women who worked in the meat processing sector and a number of women working in the forestry sector were not as optimistic indicating that there was very little in the community for employment and that the company they worked for was a major employer to the community.

If that mill shuts down, there would be no more work here and I think that's why we tolerate a lot of the things that are happening because we need to work.

Some of the women from the forestry sector indicated they would try to start up their own job in something that they would enjoy.

If there was a business I wanted to get in on, on my own...if I lost my job tomorrow, I would go and work for some of the contractors and be their safety manager, manage the paper work, the policies, procedures. Manage their trucks, get into that, I would really like that.

They also indicated they could go on Employment Insurance, take some education to get another job or live off their husband's income.

Women in forestry were more willing to relocate to another community to find a similar job than women working in agri-food.

Last resort, I would leave town. I would probably go to my sister in [another town]. There's always work there.

Women in agri-food were less willing to relocate either because they had family farms or because of their networks in the community. Some women in forestry voiced similar sentiments. One woman indicated that her father's family farm was nearby and she was not willing to leave her community and would find another job to support herself.

This is my home town and I'll be inheriting, like my father has land here and stuff; he's a farmer and was a mill worker for 30 some years, so I would just do whatever, any type of job, labourer, whatever.

Why Women Left Employment

Four women who left forestry and nine women who left agri-food were interviewed to gain their perspectives on their workplace experiences and why they had left their employment. Three women from the forestry industry indicated they were laid off from their employment due to industry downsizing, whereas the fourth individual had been a summer student.

The reasons women left the agri-food sector were more varied; however, the most common reason was that they disliked the work. The women from meat processing found the work to be hard and unrewarding.

It took me four months to quit and even then I wouldn't step down, I just quit, I knew before that ever happened that that wasn't how I wanted to spend the rest of my life and I was already starting to have problems with my arms, like pain and stuff and after that...no more, I just got really fed up with it.

A woman who had worked in the hog barns indicated that she left because she didn't like the working conditions.

Pretty much because of the people I worked with and the atmosphere of the barn. Well, since it was the first barn, it was like falling apart.

Three women indicated that they left their job, because they wanted to further their education to obtain better employment.

I took a refresher course on my secretarial or administration, and I had not taken any courses on computer. One of the ladies at... College asked me if I would be interested in taking a refresher course and so I did, and yeah she got me back into that.

Another woman noted that she decided to take different employment up north, because her wage at the hog barn was not sufficient to pay for her student loans.

Only one respondent indicated she had been terminated from her employment and felt that it had been done unjustly. She felt her termination was due to disagreements between her and her employer over how she did her job when the employer wanted her to deal with workers in a manner with which she did not agree.

Other Workplace Experiences

Corporate Structure

In total, women were recruited from six agri-food companies, three that were hog operations and three that were meat processing companies. Four of the agri-food companies involved in the study were family owned. Two of these companies were small family owned companies (one meat processing company and one hog operation) and the other two were large-scale hog operations. The fifth company was a meat processing company predominantly owned by the government, which held 94 percent of company shares. The final agricultural company was a large North American meat processing company.

Women involved in the forestry study were employed in one of five companies. One was a large multinational corporation, another was a large privately owned forest products company and the final three were joint ventures with Saskatchewan Native bands and larger corporations located in Saskatchewan.

The majority of women employed in the hog barns felt that working for a family-oriented company had a positive influence on their working conditions; the company was sympathetic to family needs and commitments, and offered flexible hours if required to handle family emergencies.

They've actually been really good and one other thing that they do is if, like most of the people there that work have kids, and if there is a problem in school, at home, one of your kids gets hurt or something...[you can] go, [it's] very family oriented.

The women also felt the company treated all employees as equals.

All I know is like, all of them at head office, I know it's family owned [the family members] don't treat you like you're beneath them and [the boss] knows every one of his employee's names. He remembers, like if you are at a function, he'll sit and talk, he'll come up and shake your hand, pat you on the back, like for him to remember my name and only meeting me for a minute...they treat you like you're one of them; we're all equal.

Women also mentioned that because the company treats them as family and the company is mindful of working conditions and wages, the atmosphere was always fun and enjoyable.

On the other hand, some of the women employed in the hog barns felt that in a family-owned company the owner's children were given preferential treatment either through better working conditions or through advancement opportunities.

It just seems the family members that do run other barns, those barns seem to get prioritized...with better working conditions, different materials and stuff like that.

However, family members often feel they have to work extra hard to prove themselves to family and other employees, because of the stigma that they always get whatever they want. Two other women noted that because they do work for a family-owned company they were often taken advantage of because of the perception that everyone was family.

I think in a small company you take a lot for granted if you know the people that are working for you. And maybe the workers don't demand as much either, because you know them that well or because it is family run.

One woman who worked for a small meat processing company felt working conditions were negatively influenced by the family-owned structure, because of low wages and poor health and safety conditions. She thought that because the company was small they could not always afford higher wages or safer working conditions.

Women who worked for the government-owned company, felt positively toward it, often citing how it was just like working for a family company. The women noted how they were

given opportunities to advance into administrative positions from the floor, feeling they may not have similar opportunities in other companies. The women working for this company also noted that many of the employees who worked for the company have been there for a very long time. On the other hand, the women who worked for the large-scale meat packing company were less positive regarding the structure of the company. They felt like they were a number and not individuals resulting in poor wages and working conditions, unfair treatment, low job security and inadequate benefits.

They make so many assumptions about their employees and they're going to design and implement programs and stuff and maybe make policies regarding discipline and so on, based on their assumption of an individual instead of knowing what's happening.

The employees also felt that when the company was bought out by the co-operative they had to work faster and be more productive.

And now if you have a good time, you'll get crap, because it's all coming down from, you know, the big guy and there's always a bigger guy ahead of him and they are just looking out for the almighty dollar, to get the product out and don't think about the people anymore, so that's a thing that is tough for me.

The majority of women employed in the forestry industry felt the structure of the company had very little influence over their working conditions. However, some women did feel the structure had influenced their workplace. The majority of these women indicated that because the employer they worked for was not Canadian, many of the policies the company advanced were not based on Canadian policies and ideals. The women noted how the workers and the company had clashed based on these differences.

Well the top management are [not Canadian]. They come here, and recently with the cutbacks and just dealing with a new contract agreement, people all stood up and put up a lot of Canadian flags in the workplace, which sent a signal saying that, you know we are Canadian...we have different labour standards.

The women felt the company was less personal than a family-owned company and felt their jobs were in jeopardy, because the company did not care about individuals. Another woman indicated that, although her employer was in a joint venture with the Native bands, she felt they had no real role in the decision-making aspect of the company.

They're in partnership, but in all the time I've been out there, like from my band I have only seen [involvement] at the grand opening...so I would like to see more interest from our band in that place. I don't know, it just seems like, like even when we have those meetings and stuff, I don't know if our band members are ever there.

Management and Employee Relations

The majority of women working in forestry had good relationships with their supervisors. Most felt they were asked their opinion on work-related matters and they were free to disagree. While personal relationships were often positive, many women described a feeling of animosity toward management as a whole. This was often related to union management dynamics surrounding contract negotiations. The industry downturn escalated already tense relations between the union and management as management tried to implement lay offs and new work systems to counteract low prices. One woman described management of the mill where she worked as nit-picky. When asked to elaborate, she described how the workers have taken increasing concessions and how these had affected work hours.

Well like little things. Like when we first got here we used to get our coveralls paid for us and now we have to pay...we only got three this time where as we had six before, now we have three and now we have to wash our coveralls, you know, garbage things like that where it's a buck five to wash a coverall. If we're going to be doing the greasy work for them they could put out the money for the grease stains. Now we have to go and stick our dirty coveralls in the washer. And before we used to work 12-hour shifts and we had fought for half an hour, like to get our lunch hours paid, so we got that but now they knocked us back down to eight and a half hours without a lunch without paid lunch. You know well why try and fight for things in the first place if they're going to take it away.

Women in the agri-food industry also noted they had a good working relationship with their managers. Managers at hog barns have a lot of leeway in terms of the way that barns and employees are handled. They are given the responsibility to handle absenteeism, discipline and hiring, and retention of employees. This gives managers the opportunity to handle situations that may be unique to themselves, such as productivity, working conditions and worker relations. Some women discussed their appreciation for their managers noting how they were just as involved in the day-to-day activities as the employees were.

Our manager's very, she's good, she's smart, she's got it under control.

However, this also can result in inconsistencies in how things are handled due to differences in manager styles. Three women indicated how they encountered different management styles, where they suggested working conditions were great at one barn, but less so at another.

Every barn is different as the manager will enforce the policies, some more strictly than other managers. When I worked at barn two, the manager [made] you wear your ear protection; you had no choice. My manager now, when we are tagging pig ears they squeal pretty loud and that's when he makes you wear ear protection but otherwise no...I think it differs from manager to manager.

Some women spoke of instances of poor management and problems that were occurring at barns they worked at, such as poor maintenance and livestock care.

As soon as the big management would come, everyone had to clean the hallways really quick and everyone had to empty out all the pits so that the bigger guys didn't see how bad the barn really was.

Other women noted how they sometimes conflicted with their managers in terms of how things were done.

Right now, the manager of the barn, I get along with him, but I don't agree with a lot of his practices, he's the one thing I dislike about my job right now.

One woman felt she was targeted by one manager who disliked her, but got along great with a different manager when she was transferred to another barn.

In the meat processing sector, women generally felt they had a good working relationship with their managers, but at times felt pressure to increase productivity. One woman felt that to improve working conditions at the meat plant, the managers needed to be changed.

Staff Recruitment and Retention

The agri-food industries face challenges in recruiting staff to work for their company. One hog employer noted that they had particular challenges in recruiting higher-level managers, professionals and technical workers due to limited services in the community, low commitment to agri-food, negative ideas about hog production and less desire to move to a rural community.

In rural Saskatchewan, it's becoming more of an issue. We've been pretty lucky, like most of our places have small grocery stores, or maintain a restaurant but some of them, it's tougher and a lot of our managers with children and stuff, they ask, like they want to know what's going to happen to the schools....well we're saying well I'll give you the number to the schools and you can find out what's going on and when you've got kids, what kind of extracurricular activities there are.

Another issue for one of the hog employers was the level of competition that existed in the rural region in which the company was located. It needs to compete against the other major players in the hog industry and with other agricultural manufacturing industries. One meat processing employer indicated it had difficulty finding employees, because the company was not able to offer the most attractive wages.

Not only do the companies have challenges in recruiting employees, finding good quality staff is even more difficult. Both hog employers noted that they look for quality employees through the newspapers, Internet and even job fairs. However, one hog employer goes so far as to recruit outside of the company to get fresh ideas.

But some of it is that we are just behind in educational factors in Saskatchewan for the hog industry, so we want to bring in somebody who's got you know, more experience or different attitudes, so we tend to pull from

even different countries. You know, for managers, we've got three or four managers, some from England, one from Mexico, so we're bringing in some different thoughts into the hog industry.

Other strategies hog employers have used to recruit employees is through competitive wages in the rural communities, benefits packages, bonus opportunities (available through one hog producer) and company perks. One hog producer went so far as to purchase 10 to 15 houses as a strategy to encourage professionals and upper management to move to the region. One hog employer also recruits individuals with families, because they are considered more stable than the younger generation. None of the agri-food employers interviewed had any specific strategies for employing women, minority groups, Aboriginal people or individuals with a disability.

A strategy adopted by one hog employer and one of the meat processors to fill management positions was to hire through the ranks of employees. In this way, they are able to train the managers to the standards they want and are familiar with the employees they put in that position. None of the employers interviewed felt they had any challenges in recruiting office administrative staff or labourers; however, finding good quality staff in these areas, particularly for labourers was a different issue all together. One woman employed in the hog barns noted the importance in having good quality staff to make the barns so successful.

I just think they've got really good people that work with them. The company is only as good as all of the people that work there and if they had people that were less than 100 percent with the company, then it wouldn't be as good as it was.

One employer did comment, that the company tended to hire more women in the farrowing and nursery department, not because this was the intention, but because more women were applying and wanting to work in those specific departments.

The agri-food employers noted that sometimes they go through large numbers of staff in one year, because it is difficult to find someone willing to stay and put in the effort. The women and employers noted that younger workers are harder to retain and only work until they make enough money to go to school or to move on to something else. One woman from the hog barns commented that people put in an application to the hog barns based on a false perception and once they get a job there, they find it more difficult than anticipated.

People outside of the industry view it as something completely different, they don't know what it is. They often view pigs as cutsey, ootsey, little tubbley, wubbley things and they're not. They don't have a work ethic, it's hard, hard work.

One hog employer noted that they lose both men and women, because they don't like the work, the smell, the showering in and out of the barns and giving needles to animals. Another hog employer indicated that staff left, because they moved elsewhere or because they decided that the work interfered with their social life. Both hog employers noted that

women also leave, because of maternity and some don't come back, because they find different employment or they decide to further their education. The employer that represented the meat processing sector was unique in that the company had a very low rate of turnover, as the majority of staff had been with the company for an average of six years. Those who left within the probation period did so, because they didn't like the job, it interfered with their personal/social life and the employer felt that these individuals did not have a good work ethic. For this particular employer, the turnover rate, although low, was considered unacceptable, because it was very expensive for the company to retrain new staff constantly. The larger meat processor however, had extremely high transition rates. According to staff members, this was because of the poor working conditions.

Strategies used by the hog employers to retain their staff were similar to recruitment strategies and included good wages and benefits, pension programs and bonus programs (for one hog employer only). The meat producer indicated that its strategy was to pick the best résumé as possible to avoid "flighty workers."

Most of the forestry employers, indicated that recruiting staff is not a challenge as they offer competitive wages and good benefit packages. Encouraging staff to relocate to a rural community is also not an issue, particularly in the professional or management end as individuals are moved through the company as part of a "succession plan" or are easily found through advertisements in the newspaper or at job fairs at universities. Labourers and clerical staff are also not viewed as a challenge to find as people generally know whether a job opening is available in the community through word of mouth.

Some of the hiring by forestry employers is based on affirmative action policies, where the companies are geared toward hiring women, Aboriginal and visible minority individuals. However, the forestry companies have not made much effort to hire people with disabilities. This may be an obvious limitation on the production line; however, even in office jobs, facilities are not provided to meet disability needs. One summer student indicated that it was not possible to complete a summer work term, because nothing was in place to facilitate her work. This may be an area that requires changes if employers are to take seriously the needs of people with physical disabilities.

Employers seeking to hire Aboriginal people go directly to the bands to locate Aboriginal men and women willing to work at the mills. However, one employer noted that it has challenges in recruiting Aboriginal women due to a negative perception of women working at a "man's job" as opposed to elsewhere. To encourage Aboriginal people to work at the mills, one employer provides bursary scholarships to take a program at SIAST or university. This program is also offered to visible minority groups and women.

Retention of staff is also not viewed as a challenge in forestry, where one employer observed that

people describe coming to work for [this company] like winning the lottery.

Nevertheless, women and Aboriginal workers leave their employment for significant reasons. Employers felt women predominantly leave due to family and child-care commitments. They also leave, because they are unable to handle discriminatory remarks made by other staff members indicating that more effort is needed to make the workplace free from harassment. Aboriginal people predominantly leave, because they either go back to their home community or because they face racial comments at the workplace. One employer noted no problems in retaining visible minority groups as Canadians are very tolerant and more accepting than [other nationalities], however less so with Aboriginal people.

Unions and Work

Only five women employed in the meat processing sector were members of unions and, aside from the women already involved in a union, the majority from the agri-food industry were not interested in having unions in their place of employment. Some women explained that they had heard negative things about unions, while others felt the unions protected people with a poor work ethic.

From what I've seen, a union...gives people the belief that they can do what they want and not get fired, because they've the union backing them up.

One woman felt that the job descriptions would be so rigid that teamwork would suffer and people would complain when they were asked to do something that was not part of their job. Two women from the hog barn explained that a union would be detrimental not only to the company, but the animals, because if strike action occurred no one would be around to care for them.

You are working with live animals. For a walkout to happen, like God forbid. I couldn't even imagine. Anybody that works in these barns has got to like the animals and for them to walk out and leave animals...What would drive people to do that?

The women in the hog barns felt their employers did care for their employees, treated them fairly, provided good wages and worked to make the barns safer. They provide yearly company negotiations so employees can table their concerns about infrastructure, wages, benefits and overall working conditions. The hog producers involved in this study try increasingly to improve working conditions as a strategy to prevent unions entering into their company and to encourage increased productivity. A woman working in the hog barns felt certain that if a union was to ever come into the company, they would lose their bonuses and cost of living increases, because the employers had no other incentives to keep their employees happy, with the exception of following strict union guidelines.

Only a small number of women was in favour of unions in the agri-food industries. These women stated that unions were important to protect employees from management decisions, ensure control over one's work, protect them from being fired and represent employees for good wages, benefits and safe and healthy working conditions. One woman employed in a

large meat processing company felt that if the union was not present in her company, working conditions would be seriously reduced.

It makes a big difference and I'm quite certain that our wage, if the company could get away with it, would be half of what we're getting now. A lot of these benefits would be eliminated, because they are costly to the employer. There would be, most definitely...working conditions, there would be no active occupational health and safety committee, because they wouldn't have a lot of these down times when people are in meetings.

According to one woman there are mixed feelings about the union that sometimes influenced poor working relationships between employees and management.

You were always aware of the union's presence, I guess, and that seemed to really divide a lot of people. Either you loved the union or you didn't.

The majority of women employed in forestry were part of a union. Similar to the women employed in agri-food, the majority of these women felt the union positively influenced their employment, offering them job security, support, protection, good wages, good benefits and better working conditions.

Fair treatment, labour standards, benefits...the conditions are just very favourable when you are involved in a union.

The majority of women noted that the union is really important to protect employees from being fired by management.

We all know that there's some people that don't get along. So if one of them is your foreman and he don't happen to like you and if you didn't have a union, how long do you think you would last?

However, some women felt the union had no effect on their working conditions.

I pay my union dues every month and they didn't really do anything for me.

A smaller number of women felt the union did not provide a positive work atmosphere often citing that they protected poor employees, resulting in negative attitudes toward particular employees.

The only thing I think the union does is protect the people that don't pull their weight and in that field it's not good, because you have people off on disability of light duty and that puts so much more weight on everybody else's shoulders.

Some women were dissatisfied with what their union had done for them, noting that they had not helped people who approached them and that the unions had not been able to stop

layoffs. Other women felt the unions were a mixed bag, sometimes beneficial and other times negative as it could cripple a company. One woman described how she felt that unions brought a lot of limitations, rules and procedures, whereas another felt that non-unionized companies paid better wages, because the companies liked the flexibility and made more attempts to keep their employees satisfied. Another woman felt the union she worked for limited the options for flexibility and did not recognize the needs of women, particularly for women with families who require flexible hours to care for young children or sick family members. She thought this was largely due to the predominantly male membership who may not consider this an important issue.

It's rarely dad that leaves work to go take junior. There are some men that are more involved and that's wonderful, but in general, it's not the male, right, who works at the mill, it's the secretary who says well my paperwork can wait...I think that in a lot of cases, it seems, that women's work is considered superfluous. It's a nice thing; it's a luxury to have that extra wage, when in reality it's not. There are a number of women out there that are the main breadwinner, the only breadwinner or a single parent, and I think the union doesn't recognize this.

Overall, women employed in the agri-food industry were far less interested in the union than women working in the forestry industry. In fact, a small meat processing company involved in the study had a union, but the employees decided to vote them out, because they felt they were not being appropriately represented. Another woman who had been employed at a large meat processing company in Alberta stated that the employees were firmly against the union.

They refused to have a union. The workers are very adamant about no union. They actually made T-shirts up that say "just say no" and it was for the union, because the union had tried to come in numerous times. And when I was working there, once the union had tried and they set up vehicles at the end of...because there's a roadway that goes into the plant and they would set up their cars and were giving out T-shirts and hats and stuff like that, just trying to get people to want the union.

She further went on to explain that a union would have been very beneficial to the people who were working there to ensure better safety and working conditions, particularly for minority groups. In the hog industry, unions are also viewed as unwelcome, where one employee explained what would happen if a union knocked on her employer's door.

I know the one time he said that if anybody ever walked in here and wanted a union he basically said, like I think he would shut down because he didn't want it.

Role of the Company in the Community

Rural communities are often economically dependent on a small number of employers. Women employed in the forestry industry and a few of the women employed at one of the

meat processing companies indicated their community was completely dependent on their employers for survival. They felt that if their employer was to shut down, their community would become a ghost town.

If that mill shuts down, there would be no more work here, and I think that's why we tolerate a lot of the things that are happening now, because you need to work. The community would fold up. Mostly if you're not working at the mill you're working in the bush, either cutting logs or you're driving the trucks that bring them in so, it keeps our community going.

Employers in the agri-food industry also recognized their importance in the community, particularly in smaller isolated communities where they may be the only employer within the region. One woman noted how her employer took pride in continuing to offer employment to farm families.

When I started working for him, he said that he really has all what he needs, but would like to see others around him, the community have jobs close to home and can continue farming if their wife wants to work or their kids. You know, I think it's a genuine concern for community and family.

To obtain community support, one hog employer provides a yearly community barbecue in appreciation of being in the community.

It's an old community and people like free things so [the employer] puts on a free barbecue, in appreciation, pork chops and everything.

Other women in the hog industry noted that their employers did not always have a positive reputation in the community, due to concerns of smell, working conditions, environmental pollution and poor treatment of livestock.

She's got us all pegged for being dead, because of the gas in there and all of the people in the area being poisoned, because of the manure smell, because they are fighting against expansion.

One woman in the forestry industry verbalized similar concerns of environmental degradation.

I know that they do environmental damage and that they probably have their money hungry paws in various endeavours all over the world.

Another woman commented that her employer had very little interest in the local community, and very rarely supported local businesses. On the other hand, employers in forestry feel they have created a positive impact in rural communities, through employment opportunities, support of local businesses and donations to numerous programs and educational scholarships.

Outside Influences

Government Policies

In 2002, the Saskatchewan government instated standard labour regulations for workers in commercial hog barns (CBC 2002) and extended the legislation to any barn with six or more employees. Prior to this change, hog workers were exempt from the Saskatchewan standard labour laws, because they were classified as agricultural workers. The new standards were initially met with resistance both by hog producers and hog organizations, who argued that it would be detrimental to smaller family operations. However, the legislation was introduced to target the larger hog operations in the province and to improve and standardize working conditions. Three women working in the hog barns commented on the labour changes and felt that it had improved wages and hours.

At that time when I was hired you got a “monkey” wage; you worked as many hours as needed to get done and now we went to the labour standard laws and it’s an eight-hour day.

Another woman said she would not have been terminated as easily from her job if the new labour laws were in place at that time.

He really didn’t have to follow any set labour code, because he was considered farm labour and that put me in a whole different spectrum legally. And he knew it, he knew it. He dotted the i’s and crossed the t’s.

In forestry, all employees fall under Saskatchewan and Canadian labour legislation that dictates the minimum requirements for workers. Forest production mills are for the most part unionized. As a result, many of the employer provisions, benefits and work protections far exceed the minimum labour standards. Unlike the agri-food industry, changes in labour legislation have not directly affected the forestry industry.

Economic Restructuring

There has been a great deal of effort in Saskatchewan to encourage the development of large-scale hog operations. It has been touted as a solution to rural demise and the future of farming in the livestock industry. Some women working in the hog industry noted that their employers were either considering or were in the process of expanding their company. One hog company recently bought out a competitor, resulting in increased work opportunities at the main office and continued employment in rural communities expecting to lose employment due to barn closures. Another woman suggested her employer was looking at expanding into the next level and potentially offer diversified employment opportunities.

They are looking at expanding into meat packing and getting a label and stuff, and it’s growing in all sorts of different areas, so even if you do go out and get an education and don’t want to get your hands on pigs, you can do all sorts of other things. You know there are desk positions here too.

Fluctuations of commodity prices have a significant impact on resource-based industries. More recently, the livestock industries have experienced enormous price fluctuations

resulting in farmers exiting from the industry and agricultural industries shutting down. Within the last year one of the big four hog producers in Saskatchewan sold its company due to poor economic returns. Women working in the hog industry recognize the influence a fluctuating market has on their employment security.

It all depends on the pork prices. Right now it's good, but last year it wasn't looking very good, so it all depends. They are going to keep the big barns going, but the small barns might go.

Some of the women wondered how their employers were able to maintain their profit due to poor hog prices.

It seems that the little guys are always losing and the big guys are getting bigger, but we don't understand how they can keep going either, because of the prices. All the inputs are increased and then on the other end you sell it, they're so low you don't make a profit.

Another woman preferred that the large hog producers handle the insecurity of the agricultural industry while she worked for a pay cheque.

I work for a hog barn, but don't own it. I don't sell them, I don't take the losses, I get a cheque.

Poor prices for meat products have been blamed for lower wages in the meat processing sector by large-scale processing companies (Griffith et al. 1995). Meat processors argue that to stay profitable they need to lower the cost of production and still keep operations going. One woman observed such an example of wage reductions with a Saskatchewan meat processing company.

Right now, their wages are much lower than they were 20 years ago. Starting wage now as advertised is \$8.50...and I know, my husband worked there during university in 1977, and he made \$13 an hour...he just packed wieners and things like that.

Other women noted how BSE and Avian flu have impacted employment opportunities and job security. One woman talked about how many of the other agricultural industries were suffering.

Right now the BSE, that's going to be tough, staying in agriculture. I know the feedlots aren't hiring as much. The feedlot down the road is hiring again, but work is so...right now pork is kind of the industry that is staying alive, with the chicken thing and all that, that's kind of scary too.

The employers in the hog industry, on the other hand, indicated that the only impact that BSE had on their company was an increase in hog sales due to health concerns regarding beef and chicken.

However, industry restructuring and company downsizing has had a negative impact on the employment opportunities for women in forestry. The softwood tariff dispute and the need to become more efficient has resulted in massive lay offs at many companies. Staff being laid off are leaving voluntarily through early retirement packages as companies try to do more with less. As noted earlier, when staff no longer leave voluntarily, lay offs will be based on seniority as opposed to minority status due to union rules and regulations.

6. WORK-FORCE DIVERSITY

Forestry companies in Saskatchewan primarily operate in the north where Aboriginal people make up the largest share of the local population. Hiring local helps companies get employees who are committed to living in the region. Hiring local in northern Saskatchewan means hiring Aboriginal people. Companies seeking Aboriginal workers are beginning to develop recruitment strategies that involve going to the reserves directly rather than waiting for Aboriginal people to come to the companies. They also review their entrance exams and interviews to determine cultural bias. Nevertheless, action is slow. One company reported that the union was reluctant to generate appointments for designated groups, because to do so would violate the long-standing tradition of making appointments by seniority. This issue may have to be taken up in negotiations involving the union and the company with the support of government equity policies to find a solution that recognizes both seniority and the need to encourage greater work-force diversity.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

In Saskatchewan, women make up only 30 percent of the labour force in primary agriculture and 27.9 percent of the labour force in agricultural manufacturing. In both cases, this is less than the Canadian average. Most women employed in primary agriculture work as farm operators and labourers. In agricultural manufacturing, women work in occupations women have traditionally held in this industry. Over 50 percent of female workers work in occupations unique to processing and manufacturing as machine operators and labourers, followed by clerical, secretarial, and sales and service occupations.

In Saskatchewan's primary forestry sector, women make up 17.3 percent of the labour force and in forestry manufacturing, women make up 17.8 percent of the labour force, slightly higher than the Canadian average. This slightly better representation in the forest industries is due to the recent growth of the industry in Saskatchewan at a time when barriers are dropping and women are begin encouraged to work in the forestry sector. The occupational patterns of Saskatchewan women in the forest industries are both traditional and non-traditional with women predominately working as labourers, and logging and forest workers and secondarily in business, finance and administration (clerical and secretarial) positions. In forestry manufacturing, the traditional occupation of business, finance and administration employs the largest group of women, but it is closely followed by occupations unique to processing, manufacturing and utilities (machine operators and labourers).

Occupational segregation remains strong in both forestry and agri-food industries, with forestry demonstrating greater inequality in both primary and secondary sectors. However, in Saskatchewan, women do hold higher percentages of the traditional male jobs in management, sales and services, trades and occupations unique to processing and utilities, indicating some female inroads into traditional male domains.

Women's work continues to be characterized by lower incomes and higher rates of part-time work. Women's incomes are lower than men's incomes in forestry and agriculture. Women are overrepresented in part-time and underrepresented in full-time, full-year employment in these industries. Saskatchewan has lower rates of full-time, full-year employment in primary agriculture, agriculture manufacturing and primary forestry industries than the Canadian average. However, Saskatchewan has higher rates of full-time, full-year employment in forestry manufacturing.

Many of the women represented in this research have taken up some of the opportunities beginning to arise for women in the agriculture and forestry industries. In primary agriculture, the women we interviewed were predominantly working as waged labourers in intensive livestock production facilities, which provides a very different experience from the traditional occupation of working on the family farm. In forestry, a much higher proportion of the women interviewed worked as labourers in non-traditional occupations in the forest sector. These women are in employment that offers better wages,

benefits, advancement opportunities and are predominantly full-time, full-year positions, characteristics that are often missing in women's occupations. Both the agri-food and forestry sectors offer some good employment opportunities for rural women and women enthusiastically listed many traditionally male jobs they thought were now open to women. The seniority system reduces the prospect of immediate gains for rural women.

Nevertheless, job segregation in these industries remains strong. As a result, women continue to have limited options in either these industries or in other jobs that provide an adequate income. Aside from these jobs, employment opportunities for women in rural communities continue to be predominantly in the service sector. Service-sector jobs often provide low levels of income that are not sufficient for women or families to survive on, let alone pay for child care.

While women have opportunities to apply for various jobs, they often face challenges to obtaining and retaining them, such as high competition for employment, managing family needs and some forms of discrimination. Some challenges come from the workplace itself. For example, while outright harassment is rare, and treated swiftly and clearly by companies, barriers based on more subtle forms of discrimination (e.g., ignoring women workers, being passed over for advancement opportunities) remain. Sensitivity training may be warranted; however, it is not clear that such efforts would be taken seriously by companies or workers. In forestry, where companies have made efforts to promote and support the hiring and retention of a diverse work force through affirmative action programs, training programs, and strictly enforced safety and harassment policies, the workplace environment was reported as positive. Women in the hog barns also reported the workplace as positive, related to the increasing efforts of employers to make the industry an attractive place to work. One of the greatest challenges faced by rural women is synchronizing home and employment responsibilities. In industries where employees are required to work shifts, arranging for child care is especially problematic. Formal child-care facilities are rare in rural Saskatchewan and the lack of child-care options requires immediate attention.

Forestry and agri-food companies expressed some challenges in obtaining a more diverse work force and identified a need to develop more creative recruitment strategies. There are also wage issues in both sectors. Not all wages in the agri-food sector are high enough to be considered a "living wage." Women in some job categories earn less than \$15,000 per year, requiring them to supplement their employment income with other sources. Additionally, the wage differential between clerical staff and labourers persists. This differential was noted in the forestry sector in particular.

Saskatchewan labour regulations currently state that overtime cannot be made mandatory. Companies may be interested in deleting this regulation to provide more flexibility with a smaller labour force. This move would be detrimental to many women workers, particularly those with young children who find it difficult to balance family and work schedules. Any move to enforce the requirement that workers work overtime should be opposed.

Women also expressed the desire for more flexible work schedules and opportunities. This may require finding ways to allow for part-time work while assuring job security. Currently,

union contracts do not allow for much flexibility. Concerns by unions that companies may split up good quality, well-paid, full-time, and permanent jobs into part-time jobs without benefits or security have made unions understandably reluctant to pursue part-time options within bargaining strategies. Paradoxically, this reluctance has reduced the range of choices for women who seek paid employment in rural areas. Movement to address this concern will likely require discussion and debate among workers, unions, government policy makers and companies outside of specific contract bargaining to see if there are ways to address possibilities for flexibility (beyond maternity and parental leaves) while maintaining job quality and security. Such an effort would support the need for some workers (women and men) who are trying to juggle home and employment responsibilities.

Concerns about health and safety were raised by women in both sectors. Women working in forestry companies suggested that health and safety policies were established and well advertised, whereas, in agri-food, women often felt that safety efforts of their employers did not go far enough. Women in agri-food, particularly in the meat processing sector, were quick to point out safety issues and violations at the workplace, despite the presence of health and safety policies. Women in both sectors believed the push to meet or exceed production targets often induced individuals and shift teams to take personal risks. Ongoing training, monitoring and enforcement of health and safety standards appear warranted.

Beyond standard concerns about the physical work and the appropriate use of machinery, women expressed concerns about dirty, dusty workplaces where toxic chemicals and hormones are used. Standards of care for work in these environments need to be strictly enforced. Additionally, women expressed concern for the long-term effects of shift work and physical labour on their bodies as they moved beyond mid-life. This period may correspond to greater seniority within some companies, so employees are likely to remain on the payroll. While concerns for the health of older workers might be difficult to translate into specific policy recommendations, companies that wish to retain their productivity might consider how best to secure the health of their long-term employees.

Concerns about livestock welfare were an issue for women working in the hog barns. A small number reported what they felt were instances of animal abuse. While hog producers have strict policies regarding the health and welfare of the animals, it is evident that women and men need a forum to report their concerns, if necessary, without fears of recrimination. Other measures may need to be enforced, such as increased ad hoc visitations without prior warnings to management, and more training and discussions.

The size, structure and history of each industry may affect the way these issues play out. The agri-food industry has grown out of small, family-owned companies that originally used labour from within family groups. The agricultural sector has a recent history of lobbying for the industry to remain as farming enterprises so they are exempt from labour standards applicable to industries. Although this effort failed at the provincial level, this origin may account for the relatively slower movement of some companies in this sector in addressing wage structures and health and safety concerns.

In contrast, forestry companies and some of the agri-food processing companies have long been part of a larger, globally integrated, industrial structures. Strong union contracts are part of these industries' long-standing structure and have contributed to a greater emphasis on good wages and benefits, as well as addressing health and safety concerns. Nevertheless, for women, unionization is not a panacea. Indeed, seniority rules established through union contracts may be a barrier to promotion and advancement. These rules may also act as barriers to recruitment of people for a more diverse work force. The integration of companies is also a double-edged situation. Integration of forest companies with other locations across Canada and beyond may serve to improve wages and working conditions or to put downward pressure on them or lead to plant closures. There is a need for government and union vigilance in this regard.

Finally, it should be noted that in rural areas, manufacturing jobs are declining and service sector employment is increasing. Since this research began, one forest company announced it will close in 2006, laying off several hundred workers. One of the large meat processing companies is in jeopardy as a competing processing plant opens in one of Saskatchewan's large urban areas. While the percentage of women workers in resource sectors may be increasing, the overall numbers in resource industries are declining, and it is unlikely that there will be a large number of opportunities in these sectors in the future. From this perspective, any labour law change that increases the wages or better the conditions of employment *outside* of the agri-food and forestry sectors will improve the employment options for rural women more broadly. Thus, although this report has focussed on opportunities within these sectors, these opportunities are not necessarily widespread or continually open. Therefore, we support improvements in labour practices, such as increasing the minimum wage, ensuring protections to part-time workers and improving job security. Such measures will improve the job prospects for rural women more broadly and particularly, in the fastest growing sector in rural areas, the service sector.

Recommendations

Address Rural Job Opportunities

There is a need for more good-paying jobs for women in rural communities. Employment for women is increasingly becoming a necessity to maintain the family, care for children and, in many cases, supplement farm income. At the same time, good-paying jobs that women have traditionally held, including education and health, are declining in rural areas due to school and hospital closures. There is a need for industry, community organizations and the Saskatchewan Department of Rural Development and Saskatchewan Labour to work together collaboratively to provide viable economic opportunities for women so they can contribute a substantial income to the household. This will give rural families the option and security to live in rural communities and achieve a good quality of life.

Address Rural Child-Care Needs

There is need for a variety of child-care options in rural communities, including daycares that offer flexible hours as well as more facilities. The National Childcare Policy, if it remains in place, brings an unparalleled opportunity for companies, communities and the Saskatchewan Minister of Community Resources and Employment to work together to come

up with creative ideas that will increase child-care options for rural families. These options may include licensed child-care spaces in on-site company daycare facilities, or if liability costs are too great, a company/community sponsored daycare in town that would provide flexible and quality child care to all members of the community. Vigilance will be needed to ensure funding is directed to rural child care.

Additionally, unions, companies, communities and government are encouraged to work together to develop flexible and creative ways to provide child care for workers, particularly shift workers. It is possible that unions and employers can negotiate provisions for child care with extended hours, with costs shared between employer and employee. Alternatively, allowances that provide workers with the opportunity for flexible work arrangements for a period of time (e.g., up to five years) may help those who have to juggle home care and employment.

Recruit and Retain a Diverse Work Force

We encourage companies and unions to continue discussing options for securing jobs for designated groups. This issue may have to be taken up in negotiations involving the union and the company with the support of government equity policies to find a solution that recognizes both seniority and the need to encourage greater work-force diversity.

Company efforts to develop more creative recruitment strategies should be supported by policy makers from a number of federal and provincial government departments and unions. This would include companies recruiting directly on Aboriginal reserves, where invited, rather than waiting for Aboriginal people to file applications with companies. In the Action Plan for Saskatchewan Women, the Saskatchewan Government committed to increase the number of partnerships that link employers to Aboriginal communities (Saskatchewan 2002).

Companies are encouraged to work with local Aboriginal bands and other groups to determine what strategies, if any, might be useful to retain workers within designated equity groups (women, Aboriginal people, visible minorities, people with a disability).

There is also a need for human resource officers to be attentive to how seniority is assigned at the time of hiring to ensure that when women and men are hired simultaneously, men's applications are not automatically processed first, thereby ensuring they always have higher seniority than women.

Creating opportunities for flexibility and job security should be addressed through discussion and debate among workers, unions, government policy makers, and companies outside of specific contract bargaining. The purpose of such discussions would be to see if there are ways to address possibilities for flexibility (beyond maternity and parental leaves) while maintaining job quality and security.

Provincial policy makers should encourage and even recognize companies that make special efforts to establish and maintain a healthy, satisfied, and diverse work force. In the Action Plan for Saskatchewan Women, the Saskatchewan government committed to work with

public service unions to address issues of workplace diversity and work–life balance (Saskatchewan 2002). The outcomes of these negotiations could provide models for other unions and employers in the province.

Address Wage and Benefit Issues

The wages obtained by women in agri-food should be addressed by industry and the provincial Department of Labour, particularly by employers that provide wages at the minimum level. Under the Action Plan for Saskatchewan Women, the Saskatchewan government committed to a goal of income equity and security that seeks to address the disparity between women and men’s wages (Saskatchewan 2002). We would reiterate the importance of this initiative as a yearly wage of \$13,000 is not sufficient for survival, requiring women and men to supplement their income in other ways. Wages in agri-food sectors where less than \$25,000 per year should be addressed.

The disparity in wages between office and production workers should be addressed by unions, government and industry. Office/clerical workers often need slightly more formal education than production workers, but get paid considerably less. This disparity is exacerbated by contract settlements that provide an increment to the base salary. Stronger pay equity legislation and policy by the province might consider that people with similar education backgrounds and years of experience be considered in the formula for pay equity. Thus, such efforts would consider not just equal pay for equal jobs but more equal pay for jobs with certain levels of qualifications, and thereby improve the prospects for office workers versus production workers.

Saskatchewan labour regulations state that overtime cannot be made mandatory. Companies may be interested in deleting this regulation to provide more flexibility with a smaller labour force. This move would be detrimental to many women workers, particularly those who have young children and find it difficult to balance family and work schedules. Any move to enforce the requirement that workers work overtime should be opposed.

Beyond the resource sectors studied here, government should be encouraged to make improvements in labour practices for all workers, such as increasing the minimum wage, ensuring protections to part-time workers and improving job security. Such measures will improve the job prospects for rural women more broadly and particularly, in the fastest growing sector in rural areas, the service sector.

While sick leave is not mandatory, companies that do not provide sick leave options should reconsider, particularly in workplaces where employees are prone to illnesses that may be caused by working conditions (e.g., temperature, air quality, hazardous materials, humidity).

In December 2005, Saskatchewan introduced work and family balance awards for employers that provide a family-friendly workplace. These are sponsored by the Ministry of Labour. These awards should be widely advertised in workplaces with non-traditional employment for women to provide incentives for employers to provide healthy and family-oriented work sites. Advertising the winners in these workplaces may also induce other employers to seek to achieve similar results.

Address Worker Health and Safety

Continual monitoring and enforcement of use of personal protective equipment, machine guards and other safety measures are required to control safety and health risks in the agri-food and forestry sectors. While the equipment may sometimes be considered cumbersome and heavy, the numbers of injuries and sick leaves will be reduced. Personal protective equipment that should be available to all employees may include but not be limited to appropriate non-slip footwear or steel-toed boots, gloves, aprons, headgear, masks, hard-hats and ear plugs. Review of equipment should also be done to ensure that industry standards related to quality are maintained.

Bonus premiums to work in cold temperatures in packing plants have been provided to compensate employees working in cold conditions in Australia and Belgium. Similar compensation should be considered due to the increased risk of injuries, stress and health problems when working in cold conditions.

Continual health and safety training courses should also be provided to employees to stress that working conditions are dangerous unless safety protocols are followed. Women in the hog barns felt that updates on emergency protocols (i.e., fire, hydrogen sulphide levels and pit draining) are required on a yearly basis to enforce the need to follow appropriate procedures. Standards of care on the use of toxic chemicals and hormones in the workplace need to be monitored and enforced by employers. Ongoing training and discussions are required on the appropriate handling and use of chemical and hormones in the workplace. In forestry, many health and safety courses are provided on company time and free of charge for workers. These practices should be standard for agri-food industries as well. In the hog industry, companies may want to consider only having men handle particular hormones that may have a detrimental effect on women's health. Various courses on legislation and occupational health and safety are also available through the Occupational Health and Safety Division of Saskatchewan Labour.

While safety has greatly improved in forestry and agri-food and steps are continually taken to maintain safety, employers should monitor operations to ensure that company protocols and procedures are being followed and updated on an ongoing basis. Additionally, managers at all levels should reinforce that production targets should not be achieved by risking personal employee safety. Safety should be a joint venture by employers and employees, and, employers should not tolerate safety violations. Employers should also continually stress that employees will not be reprimanded for reporting safety violations at their workplace.

The concerns for the health of older workers might be difficult to translate into specific policy recommendations, but companies that wish to retain their productivity levels might consider how best to secure the health of their long-term employees.

Recommendations regarding occupational health and safety should be directed to the Minister of Labour who may consider whether to introduce them as policy or amend the occupational health and safety regulations that guide provincial standards.

Address Educational and Advancement Opportunities

Educational opportunities for workers should be supported by companies, unions and government. In both forestry and agri-food, while lots of opportunities were available, some women were discouraged from taking them up, because they required more child care. Companies should consider a small number of “bursaries” for child care when women or men select education opportunities.

Additionally, women sometimes turned down advancement for the same reason. Companies need to think hard about how to make management more attractive to women if they wish to have women represented in other job classifications.

Women also turned down education opportunities and advancement opportunities due to a lack of confidence in their abilities. Sensitivity to this attitude and early training in non-traditional occupations may improve women’s uptake of those opportunities.

APPENDIX A: AGRIFOOD SECTOR EMPLOYEE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

- I: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION
- II: YOUR JOB EXPERIENCES
- III: SPOUSE'S CURRENT EMPLOYMENT
- IV: PERSPECTIVES ON CHANGE

I: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

Interviewers, please write in the responses for these questions during the interview.

1. name: _____
2. job title (if applic) _____
3. address: _____
(P.O. Box, postal code) _____
4. phone: _____
5. year born: _____
6. To which ethnic or cultural group(s) did your ancestors belong? _____

If Aboriginal ancestry:

7. Do you identify with an Aboriginal group (Cree, Dene, Métis)?
8. Are you a member of an Indian band/First Nation? _____
9. Are you a Treaty Indian or a registered Indian as defined by the *Indian Act* of Canada? _____
10. What community do you call home? _____
11. How long have you lived in [THIS COMMUNITY]? (years/months or start year)?
12. Are you living with a spouse/partner?

(For the purposes of this study a spouse/partner means a person you are legally married to; a person you are living with in a common-law marriage; and/or a person you are living with as a same-sex couple.)

13. Do you have children or adults that you support financially?
14. Do you make arrangements for child care or elder care? [**IF NO**, go to next section (Q 19). Otherwise, select based on the kind of care identified by interviewee.]
15. What arrangements do you make for child care?
16. What is the availability of quality child care in your community or workplace?
17. What arrangements do you make for elder care?
18. What is the availability of quality elder care in your community?

Note: I am going to ask you questions about your job experiences, then [if relevant] I am going to ask you questions about your partner's job.

PART II: YOUR JOB EXPERIENCES

19. Do you work in [THIS COMMUNITY]? _____

IF YES, Go To Question 22

IF NO,

20. What community do you work in?
21. How far do you have to travel to get to work?
22. Who are you currently working for?
23. What is your current position with [the company]?
24. _____
How would you classify this position according to the following categories?
- Managers
 - Professionals (e.g., Accountants, Human Resources, Scientists, Engineers, Nurses)
 - Technical and Trades
 - Marketing and Sales
 - Clerical/Administrative
 - Labourers
 - Other (Please List): _____
25. How would you describe your present employment status?
- Self-employed
 - Full-time year round [30 hours per week or more]
 - Part time [29 hours per week or less]
 - Seasonal full time
 - Seasonal part time
 - Full-time homemaker
 - Retired
 - Unemployed
26. When did you begin this particular position?
27. How long have you worked for your employer?
28. How long have you worked within this industry (agri-food/forestry)?
29. Have you ever held a different job within the industry?
- IF YES,**
30. Please describe.
31. Are you currently a member of a union?
- IF YES,**
32. Please state the union name.
33. Do you do work outside of this job for which you are paid?
- IF YES,**
34. Please describe.
35. What is the highest level of formal education that you have completed?
- 1 Some high school
 - 2 Completed high school
 - 3 Some technical and vocational training
 - 4 Completed technical or vocational training
 - 5 Some community college
 - 6 Completed community college
 - 7 Some university

8 Received an undergraduate degree

9 Received graduate degree

36. Has the education you received been relevant to your current employment?
37. Do you consider this an "ideal" job/situation for you?
38. Are there other types of opportunities available for this kind of work within this area?
IF YES,
39. What other types of opportunities are available?
40. Do you know of any training or education opportunities available to you within the industry or within the firm you work for?
41. How did you find your current job?
 ___ Formal methods
e.g., newspaper advertisements, employment agencies, Internet advertisements, other job postings, professional organizations
 ___ Informal networks
e.g., word of mouth, including employee referrals
 ___ Direct applications and walk in
42. When you applied for your job in this industry, did you face any challenges (either within the home or with a potential employer)?
e.g., education and/or training
health
acceptance by yourself
availability
arranging child care or elder care
43. What are your reasons for taking a job in this industry?
44. Does your spouse support your current employment?
45. What do you like about your job?
46. What do you **DIS**like about your job?
47. What challenges do you face in staying in this industry?
e.g., education and/or training
health
acceptance by yourself
availability
arranging child care or elder care
48. I am going to read a list of benefits. Please tell me what benefits you get with your job.
 ___ Canada Pension
 ___ Private pension
 ___ Employment Insurance
 ___ Holiday
 ___ Sick leave
 ___ Personal days (for family sickness, dentist's appointments)
 ___ Extended medical (e.g., prescription drugs, physiotherapy)
 ___ Dental
 ___ Maternity leave
 ___ Employee assistance plan (counselling)
 ___ Other (Please specify)
49. Are there benefits you do not receive that you think would be valuable?

50. Do you feel that your basic wage reflects your current skills?
51. Do you have opportunities for additional income through overtime or from other sources in [company name]?
52. Do you have opportunities for promotion/advancement in your present position?
53. Thinking about the physical aspects of the job, do you think this is a healthy place to work? [impact of shift work?]
54. Does the company have policies related to maintaining workplace safety?
55. Are there regular training and updating sessions for employees?
56. Thinking about what it's like to work here, have you ever been made uncomfortable in your job by a co-worker?
IF YES,
 57. Please discuss. What did you do?
58. Have you ever been made uncomfortable in your job by a manager or an employer?
IF YES,
 59. Please discuss. What did you do?
60. Does the company have a policy on maintaining a workplace that is free from discrimination or harassment?
61. Thinking back on questions relating to opportunities for and challenges of obtaining work, promotion, training, maintaining your job, do you suppose any of the challenges or opportunities are different from those men may face?
62. Does being unionized [a non-unionized shop] affect working conditions for you?
63. I have learned that this firm is [family owned, co-operative owned, privately owned, co-owned and co-managed with Aboriginal organization].
 Does this structure affect working conditions (pay level, benefits, gender bias etc.) for you?
64. How does your paid work (this job and other if applicable) affect other aspects of your life [e.g., time with children or other family, time for volunteer work etc.]?
65. How would you support yourself if you lost your job [e.g., collect EI, move]?

PART III: SPOUSE'S CURRENT EMPLOYMENT

IF LIVING WITH A SPOUSE, CONTINUE AS BELOW. IF NOT LIVING WITH A SPOUSE, GO TO Q 74

66. Is your spouse/partner/husband currently employed in the **paid** work force?
67. What is/are his/her current occupation(s)?
68. Please fit your spouse/partner's job within one of the categories below. Interviewer check occupation.
- Managers
 - Professionals (e.g., Accountants, Human Resources, Scientists, Engineers, Nurses)
 - Technical and Trades
 - Marketing and Sales
 - Clerical/Administrative
 - Labourers
 - Other (Please List) _____
69. Does he/she work here in [THIS COMMUNITY]?

70. How would you describe his/her present employment status?
- Self-employed
 - Full-time year round [30 hours per week or more]
 - Part time [29 hours per week or less]
 - Seasonal full time
 - Seasonal part time
 - Full-time homemaker
 - Retired
 - Unemployed
71. What is the highest level of formal education that he/she has completed?
- 1 Some high school
 - 2 Completed high school
 - 3 Some technical and vocational training
 - 4 Completed technical or vocational training
 - 5 Some community college
 - 6 Completed community college
 - 7 Some university
 - 8 Received an undergraduate degree
 - 9 Received graduate degree
72. I am going to read a list of benefits. Please tell me what benefits your partner gets with his/her job.
- Canada Pension
 - Private pension
 - Employment Insurance
 - Holiday
 - Sick leave
 - Personal days (for family sickness, dentist's appointments)
 - Extended medical (e.g., prescription drugs, physiotherapy)
 - Dental
 - Maternity leave
 - Employee assistance plan (counselling)
 - Other? (Please specify)
73. What effect, if any, does your spouse's employment have on your own employment options?

PART IV: PERSPECTIVES ON CHANGE

74. Do you work for pay more, less or about the same as in 2001? (paid work)
- I work more now than in 2001
 - I work less now than in 2001
 - I work about the same
 - Don't know
 - Not applicable
75. Do you have more job security now than you did in 2001?
- If no partner, go to Q 77***
76. Does your spouse work more, less or about the same as in 2001? (paid work)

- My spouse works more now than in 2001
 My spouse works less now than in 2001
 My spouse works about the same
 Don't know
 Not applicable
77. How do you suppose opportunities for women's participation in the industry have changed since 2001?
78. I have a separate page that asks questions about your personal (individual) and household (with others) income. This information will be kept strictly confidential and it will not be shared with others. Please complete this page and place it in this envelope (provide separate envelope).
79. Has your household income (approximately) increased, decreased or remained about the same, compared to what it was in 2001 (include all income)?
 Increased
 Decreased
 Remained about the same
80. If changed, what might account for the change?
e.g., one person became employed, unemployed
81. Considering both your own education and work experience and the changes that you see happening around you, what would you advise your children **[or other young people]** to do in terms of education and employment?
82. Do you know women who have left this line of work? Have you any contact information?
83. Would you be willing to participate in a workshop to discuss the overall results and to consider suggestions for government policy related to employment of rural women?
84. Do you have any questions or other comments for us?

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE PROJECT, *Hidden Actors, Muted Voices: The Employment of Rural Women in Canadian Forestry and Agri-Food Industries*

The questions below will help us to compare your demographic characteristics with those of the larger census population. The answers will remain strictly confidential. Please circle the appropriate answer and place in the envelope provided by the interviewer. Thank you.

Personal:

PLEASE CIRCLE YOUR AVERAGE ANNUAL PERSONAL EMPLOYMENT INCOME (BEFORE TAXES, YOUR EMPLOYMENT) (only you)

< 10,000

10,000-29,999

30,000-49,999

50,000-69,999

70,000-89,999

90,000-109,999

110,000-129,999

130,000-149,999

> 150,000

Personal:

PLEASE CIRCLE YOUR AVERAGE ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME (BEFORE TAXES, ALL SOURCES) (you and other income earners in the household)

< 10,000

10,000-29,999

30,000-49,999

50,000-69,999

70,000-89,999

90,000-109,999

110,000-129,999

130,000-149,999

> 150,000

APPENDIX B: FORESTRY SECTOR EMPLOYEE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

I. PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

II: YOUR JOB EXPERIENCES

III: SPOUSE OR PARTNER'S CURRENT EMPLOYMENT

IV: PERSPECTIVES ON CHANGE

I: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

Interviewers, please write in the responses for these questions during the interview.

1. name: _____
2. job title (if applic) _____
3. address: _____
(P.O. Box, postal code) _____
4. phone: _____
5. year born: _____
6. To which ethnic or cultural group(s) did your ancestors belong? _____

If Aboriginal ancestry:

7. Do you identify with an Aboriginal group (Cree, Dene, Métis)? _____
8. Are you a member of an Indian band/First Nation? _____
9. Are you a Treaty Indian or a registered Indian as defined by the *Indian Act* of Canada? _____
10. What community do you call home? _____
11. How long have you lived in [THIS COMMUNITY]? (years/months or start year)
12. Are you living with a spouse/partner?

(For the purposes of this study a spouse/partner means a person you are legally married to; a person you are living with in a common-law marriage; and/or a person you are living with as a same-sex couple.)

13. Do you have children or adults that you support financially?
14. Do you make arrangements for child care or elder care? [**IF NO**, go to next section (Q 19). Otherwise, select based on the kind of care identified by interviewee.]
15. What arrangements do you make for child care?
16. What is the availability of quality child care in your community or workplace?
17. What arrangements do you make for elder care?
18. What is the availability of quality elder care in your community?

Note: I am going to ask you questions about your job experiences, then [if relevant] I am going to ask you questions about your partner's job.

PART II: YOUR JOB EXPERIENCES

19. Do you work in [THIS COMMUNITY]? _____
IF YES, Go To Question 22

IF NO,

20. What community do you work in?
21. How far do you have to travel to get to work?
22. Who are you currently working for?
23. What is your current position with [the company]?
-
24. How would you classify this position according to the following categories?
- Managers
 - Professionals (e.g., Accountants, Human Resources, Scientists, Engineers, Nurses)
 - Technical and Trades
 - Marketing and Sales
 - Clerical/Administrative
 - Labourers
 - Other (Please List): _____
25. How would you describe your present employment status?
- Self-employed
 - Full-time year round [30 hours per week or more]
 - Part time [29 hours per week or less]
 - Seasonal full time
 - Seasonal part time
 - Full-time homemaker
 - Retired
 - Unemployed
26. When did you begin this particular position?
27. How long have you worked for your employer [this company]?
28. How long have you worked within the forest industry?
29. Have you ever held a different job within the forest industry?
- IF YES,**
30. Please describe
31. Have you held a job outside of the forest industry over the past five years?
- IF YES,**
32. Please describe
33. Do you do work outside of this job for which you are paid?
- IF YES,**
34. Please describe.
35. What is the highest level of formal education that you have completed?
- 1 Some high school
 - 2 Completed high school
 - 3 Some technical and vocational training
 - 4 Completed technical or vocational training
 - 5 Some community college
 - 6 Completed community college
 - 7 Some university
 - 8 Received an undergraduate degree
 - 9 Received graduate degree

36. Has the education you received been relevant to your current employment?
37. Do you know of any training or education opportunities available to you within the industry or within the firm you work for? (probe: to increase the participation of women or Aboriginal people).
38. Do you consider this an “ideal” job/situation for you?
39. Are there other types of opportunities available for this kind of work within [THIS COMMUNITY]?
- IF YES,**
40. What other types of opportunities are available?
41. Are you currently a member of a union?
- IF YES,**
42. Please state the union name.
- IF NO,**
43. Are any other workers at this firm unionized?
- IF YES, (IF NO, Go To Question 45)**
44. Please describe.
45. Does being unionized [a non- unionized shop] affect working conditions for you?
46. How would you describe relations between the union and management?
47. Can you describe an experience that you have had with the union?
48. What strategies, if any has the union taken to represent interests that are specific to Aboriginal workers? (expand)
49. What strategies, if any has the union taken to represent interests that are specific to women workers? (expand)
50. What strategies, if any has the union taken to represent the interests of the [town or city name] community?
51. What do you like about your job?
52. What do you **DIS**like about your job?
53. Can you describe how problems are solved in your daily work activities? (Who is involved?)
54. Who usually decides what you will do in your work?
55. How would describe the relationship between you and your supervisor? (Do you feel free to disagree, are you asked your opinion on work related matters?)
56. How did you find your current job?
- ___ Formal methods
e.g., newspaper advertisements, employment agencies, Internet advertisements, other job postings, professional organizations
- ___ Informal networks
e.g., word of mouth, including employee referrals
- ___ Direct applications and walk in
57. When you applied for your job in this industry, did you face any challenges (either within the home or with a potential employer)?
e.g., education and/or training
health
transportation
acceptance by yourself
availability

arranging child care or elder care

58. What are your reasons for taking a job in this industry?
59. Within this industry, why did you choose to work for this particular firm? Explain. (prompts: family, friends, firm ownership, culture)
60. What challenges do you face in staying in this industry?
e.g., education and/or training
health
acceptance by yourself
availability
arranging child care or elder care
61. Does your spouse or partner support your current employment?
62. I am going to read a list of benefits. Please tell me what benefits you get with your job.
- Canada Pension
 - Private pension
 - Employment Insurance
 - Holiday
 - Sick leave
 - Personal days (for family sickness, dentist's appointments)
 - Extended medical (e.g., prescription drugs, physiotherapy)
 - Dental
 - Maternity leave
 - Employee assistance plan (counselling)
 - Other? (Please specify)
63. Are there benefits you do not receive that you think would be valuable?
64. Do you feel that your basic wage reflects your current skills?
65. Do you have opportunities for additional income through overtime or from other sources in [company name]?
66. Do you have opportunities for promotion/advancement in your present position?
67. Thinking about the physical aspects of the job, do you think this is a healthy place to work? [impact of shift work?]
68. Does the company have policies related to maintaining workplace safety?
69. Are there regular training and updating sessions for employees?
70. Thinking about what it's like to work here, have you ever have been made uncomfortable in your job by a co-worker?

IF YES,

71. Please discuss. What did you do?

72. Have you ever been made uncomfortable in your job by a manager or an employer?

IF YES,

73. Please discuss. What did you do?

74. Does the company have a policy on maintaining a workplace that is free from discrimination or harassment?
75. Thinking back on questions relating to opportunities for and challenges of obtaining work, promotion, training, maintaining your job, do you suppose any of the challenges or opportunities are different from those men may face?
76. I have learned that this firm is [family owned, co-operative owned, privately owned, co-owned and co-managed with Aboriginal organization].

77. Does this structure affect working conditions (pay level, benefits, gender bias etc.) for you?
78. How does your paid work (this job and other if applicable) affect other aspects of your life (e.g., time with children or other family, time for volunteer work etc.)?
79. How would you support yourself if you lost your job (e.g., collect EI, move)?
80. If you could have any job in any firm in the forest sector, what would it be? (Explain why.)

PART III – SUPPORT FOR WOMEN AND ABORIGINAL EMPLOYEES

81. Do you work with other people of a similar cultural background to yourself?
82. Have you participated in any Aboriginal awareness programs as an employee in this firm?
83. How would you describe the relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal employees in this firm?
84. What can you think of that might support Aboriginal cultural values in the workplace? (Expand.)
85. Are workers at this firm able to obtain time off to care for members of their:
 - a. immediate family?
 - b. extended family or community (e.g., aunt, uncle, cousin)?
86. Are Aboriginal workers at this firm able to obtain time off to participate in cultural activities or hunting or fishing activities?
87. In what other ways does this firm take Aboriginal interests into consideration when making decisions?
88. In what ways do you feel that this firm takes the interests of women into account when making decisions?

PART III: SPOUSE OR PARTNER'S CURRENT EMPLOYMENT

IF LIVING WITH A SPOUSE/PARTNER, CONTINUE AS BELOW. IF NOT LIVING WITH A SPOUSE/PARTNER, GO TO Q 91

89. Is your spouse/partner currently employed in the **paid** work force?
90. What is/are his/her current occupation(s)?
91. Please fit your spouse/partner's job within one of the categories below. Interviewer check occupation.
 - Managers
 - Professionals (e.g., Accountants, Human Resources, Scientists, Engineers, Nurses)
 - Technical and Trades
 - Marketing and Sales
 - Clerical/Administrative
 - Labourers
 - Other (Please List) _____
92. Does he/she work here in [THIS COMMUNITY]?
93. How would you describe his/her present employment status?
 - self-employed

- full-time year round (30 hours per week or more)
 - part-time (29 hours per week or less)
 - seasonal full time
 - seasonal part time
 - full-time homemaker
 - retired
 - unemployed
94. What is the highest level of formal education that he/she has completed?
- 1 Some high school
 - 2 Completed high school
 - 3 Some technical and vocational training
 - 4 Completed technical or vocational training
 - 5 Some community college
 - 6 Completed community college
 - 7 Some university
 - 8 Received an undergraduate degree
 - 9 Received graduate degree
95. I am going to read a list of benefits. Please tell me what benefits your partner gets with his/her job.
- Canada Pension
 - Private pension
 - Employment Insurance
 - Holiday
 - Sick leave
 - Personal days (for family sickness, dentist's appointments)
 - Extended medical (e.g., prescription drugs, physiotherapy)
 - Dental
 - Maternity leave
 - Employee assistance plan (counselling)
 - Other? (Please specify)
96. What effect, if any, does your spouse or partner's employment have on your own employment options?

PART IV: PERSPECTIVES ON CHANGE

97. Do you work for pay more, less or about the same as in 2001? (paid work)
- I work more now than in 2001
 - I work less now than in 2001
 - I work about the same
 - Don't know
 - Not applicable
98. Do you have more job security now than you did in 2001?
- If no partner, go to Q 100***
99. Does your spouse/partner work more, less or about the same as in 2001? (paid work)
- My spouse/partner works more now than in 2001
 - My spouse/partner works less now than in 2001

My spouse/partner works about the same
Don't know
Not applicable

100. How do you suppose opportunities for women's participation in the industry have changed since 2001?
101. I have a separate page that asks questions about your personal (individual) and household (with others) income. This information will be kept strictly confidential and it will not be shared with others. Please complete this page and place it in this envelope (provide separate envelope).
102. Has your household income (approximately) increased, decreased or remained about the same, compared to what it was in 2001? (include all income)
Increased
Decreased
Remained about the same
103. If changed, what might account for the change?
e.g., one person became employed, unemployed
104. Considering both your own education and work experience and the changes that you see happening around you, what would you advise your children (**or other young people**) to do in terms of education and employment?
105. Do you know women who have left this line of work? Have you any contact information?
106. Would you be willing to participate in a workshop to discuss the overall results and to consider suggestions for government policy related to employment of rural women?
107. Do you have any questions or other comments for us?

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE PROJECT, *Hidden Actors, Muted Voices: The Employment of Rural Women in Canadian Forestry and Agri-Food Industries*

The questions below will help us to compare your demographic characteristics with those of the larger census population. The answers will remain strictly confidential. Please circle the appropriate answer and place in the envelope provided by the interviewer. Thank you.

Personal:

PLEASE CIRCLE YOUR AVERAGE ANNUAL PERSONAL EMPLOYMENT INCOME (BEFORE TAXES, YOUR EMPLOYMENT) (only you)

< 10,000

10,000-29,999

30,000-49,999

50,000-69,999

70,000-89,999

90,000-109,999

110,000-129,999

130,000-149,999

> 150,000

Personal:

PLEASE CIRCLE YOUR AVERAGE ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME (BEFORE TAXES, ALL SOURCES) (you and other income earners in the household)

< 10,000

10,000-29,999

30,000-49,999

50,000-69,999

70,000-89,999

90,000-109,999

110,000-129,999

130,000-149,999

> 150,000

APPENDIX C: EMPLOYER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

BACKGROUND

HUMAN RESOURCES

- Recruitment
- Training and Advancement
- Absenteeism
- Contract/Pay/Benefits
- Retention and Loss

WORKER/MANAGEMENT RELATIONS

OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

COMPANY PHILOSOPHY

OUTSIDE THE FIRM: COMPANY AND GLOBAL RELATIONS

MATERIALS REQUESTED

BACKGROUND

Name of company: _____

Mailing address: _____

Name of contact: _____

Position: _____

HUMAN RESOURCES

I am going to begin by asking a series of questions that relate to human resources, including recruitment, training and advancement, absenteeism, contract, pay and benefits, and retention and loss.

HR: Recruitment

We have divided employees into five broad occupational categories realizing that hiring, recruitment and training practices might differ among different jobs. These include:

- Managers
- Professionals
- Clerical workers
- Technical workers
- Labourers

1. Approximately what percentage of your hiring for each of the listed employee categories is from word of mouth versus formal ads:
 - Managers
 - Professionals
 - Clerical workers
 - Technical workers
 - Labourers
2. How easy is it to find quality applicants for each employee group:
 - Managers
 - Professionals
 - Clerical workers
 - Technical workers
 - Labourers
3. How do you advertise for positions for each employee group?
 - What medium (e.g., local newspaper, national newspaper, job fairs and booths):
 - Managers
 - Professionals
 - Clerical workers
 - Technical workers
 - Labourers
 - In what locations/geographic areas do you advertise (this municipality, other communities, nearby reserve, province, beyond province)?
4. Which of these ways to find employees above has been the most successful in producing quality applicants?
 - What medium (e.g., local newspaper, national newspaper, job fairs and booths):
 - Managers
 - Professionals
 - Clerical workers
 - Technical workers
 - Labourers
 - In what locations/geographic areas do you advertise (this municipality, other communities, nearby reserve, province, beyond province)?
5. Which of these advertising methods have been most successful in producing applicants from designated hiring groups (Aboriginal people, women, people with disabilities, visible minorities)?
 - What medium (e.g., local newspaper, national newspaper, job fairs and booths):
 - Managers
 - Professionals
 - Clerical workers
 - Technical workers
 - Labourers
 - In what locations/geographic areas do you advertise (this municipality, nearby reserve, province, beyond province)?

Note: The four designated groups are assigned by the federal government and include women, Aboriginal people, people from a visible minority and people with a disability.

6. What kind of education, training, and/or experience is required for positions in each job category:
- Managers
 - Professionals
 - Clerical
 - Technical and trades
 - Labourers

Note: Some companies have programs established or people hired to address personnel relations for designated groups (women, Aboriginal people, people from a visible minority, people with a disability). A person assigned to address personnel relations might try to establish policies or practices of hiring, retention, input, etc. from these groups.

7. Does the firm have a personnel relations program to address human resources issues for designated groups?
- If yes, please describe.
 - What are the main components of this program?
 - Who implements this program?
 - What percentage of this person's time is dedicated to personnel relations of designated groups?
8. What are the principle incentives/reasons for hiring and retaining people from the four designated groups? (Prompts: government policy/requirements, labour market, public relations, ethics)

HR: Training and Advancement

9. Do you provide educational or training programs within the firm for employees in any of the following occupational groups after they are hired?
- If yes, please describe.
 - Managers
 - Professionals
 - Clerical
 - Technical
 - Labourers
10. Do you provide direct support for the education and training of current employees outside the firm? Please describe.
- Payment of tuition
 - Allow time off to undertake education/training
 - Provide other incentives for training (please describe) (e.g., pay increase on successful completion)
11. Do you provide or support any training and educational opportunities for people in the community before they are hired:
- E.g., scholarship programs
 - Displays in high schools
 - Help design curriculum at community colleges

12. Are any of the above training/educational programs specifically geared for one of the four designated groups: women, Aboriginal people, people of a visible minority, people with a disability?

Please describe.

HR: Absenteeism

13. What is the current rate of absenteeism?
14. What are top reasons for absenteeism from work from employees in the following groups:
- Women
 - Men
 - Aboriginal people (Prompt: is there a difference between Aboriginal women and men)
 - People of visible minority
 - People with a disability
15. Is the rate of absenteeism for any of the above groups higher or lower than average for all employees? If yes, please explain why you think this is the case:
- Women
 - Men
 - Aboriginal people
 - People of visible minority
 - People with a disability.
16. What strategies are used to reduce absenteeism?
17. Are any of these strategies specific to the designated groups?
18. What are the chances that a person from each of the designated groups might be promoted within the occupational category or to a category "above":
- Managers
 - Professionals
 - Clerical
 - Technical
 - Labourers

HR: Retention and Loss

19. What is the current rate of employee turnover?
Do you consider this rate of turnover satisfactory?
20. What do you think are the top reasons for each of the employee categories to leave or quit their job at this firm:
- Women
 - Men
 - Aboriginal people
 - People of visible minority
 - People with a disability

21. Is the rate of employee turnover for any of the following designated groups higher or lower than average for all employees? If yes, please explain why you think this is the case.
- Women
 - Aboriginal people
 - People of visible minority
 - People with a disability
22. What strategies are used by the firm to increase worker retention?
23. Does the firm have any strategies to increase retention of employees from each of the four designated groups:
- Women
 - Aboriginal people
 - Visible minority
 - People with a disability
24. Are any of the following options available for employees at this firm:
- Flexible work hours
 - Job sharing
 - Leaves of absence for family/personal reasons
 - Leaves of absence or flexible scheduling for cultural activities
 - National aboriginal day off
 - Bereavement leave for immediate family
 - Bereavement leave for extended family or community members
 - Leaves of absence for hunting, fishing or farming activities
 - Child care on site
 - List of child care providers
 - Flexible scheduling to accommodate child care, elder care or family emergencies
25. Does this firm provide any other incentives to support family life?
26. Have you faced any resistance to implementing any initiatives designed to increase retention, reduce absenteeism or increase hiring of designated groups from:
- Unions (describe)
 - Other management levels
 - The workers themselves
 - Other
27. How does the company deal with discrimination and harassment claims? (Probe: is there an individual or forum that employees can bring claims to)
28. How does the company deal with worker safety issues? (Probe: is there an individual or forum that employees can bring claims to)
29. How does the company deal with worker health issues? (Probe: is there an individual or forum that employees can bring claims to)
30. How does the company deal with animal abuse? (Probe: is there an individual or forum that employees can bring claims to)

WORKER/MANAGEMENT RELATIONS

31. Are any specific strategies used to maintain positive relations between workers and management?

32. Please describe the major industrial relations/labour events- either disputes or agreements – if any, in the past five years.
33. Have any of these events affected your ability to attract and maintain a diverse work force?
34. What are the most pressing local issues related to employment at [this company]?

OUTSIDE THE FIRM: COMMUNITY AND GLOBAL CHANGE

35. Has your company been affected by the (BSE, avian flu, US pork tariff)? Please describe how.
Has this affected employment at your firm? (Prompts: number of people employed, length of contracts, wages.)
36. Are there any other changes in the business climate for agriculture that have affected your firm over the past 10 years? Please describe.
37. Is this firm ever required to hire or let go of people rapidly due to changes in the market, or to adapt to fluctuating production needs?
How does this work?
If there are regular shutdowns, how does the layoff and call back system work?
38. What considerations are made when deciding who to let go when downsizing occurs?
How do these considerations differ between unionized and non-unionized workers?
Does this include considering whether employees are from designated groups?
39. In what ways has the labour market in the community changed over the past 10 years?
40. In what ways have your labour practices changed over the past 10 years in response to the above changes?
41. Have any of the above business and labour market changes affect your ability to attract and retain a diverse work force (women, Aboriginal people, visible minorities, people with a disability)
42. Beyond the front door, many firms give back to their local communities. What community-based activities are you particularly proud of?
43. Do you have any questions or other comments for us?

MATERIALS REQUESTED

In addition to the questions you have addressed verbally, we wondered if there were documents available for us to read. In particular, would it be possible to obtain copies of the following documents?

- Mission statement of the firm
- Annual reports for last three years
- Policy that addresses worker harassment
- Policy that addresses worker safety
- Formal agreements, arrangements or memorandums of understanding with Aboriginal organizations (e.g., joint ventures, co-management arrangements)

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE PROJECT, *Hidden Actors, Muted Voices: The Employment of Rural Women in Canadian Forestry and Agri-Food Industries*

Definitions of Occupational Categories

Management occupations: Occupations in this broad occupational category are primarily concerned with carrying out the functions of management by planning, organizing, coordinating, directing, controlling, staffing and formulating, implementing or enforcing policy, either directly or through other levels of management. Supervising is not considered to be a management function.

Professional occupations: Occupations in this occupational category include accountants, financial and business personnel, human resources employees, scientists, engineers, nurses).

Technical and trades:

Occupations in this occupational group include biological and forestry technicians, people doing trades work including machinists, electricians, mechanics, plumbers, masons, millwrights.

Clerical: Occupations in this group are primarily concerned with a variety of clerical and administrative tasks in offices, and recording or transcribing verbatim proceedings in courts, legislative assemblies or committees.

Labourers: Occupations in this group are primarily concerned with performing manual tasks and assisting machine operators in manufacturing.

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ENDNOTES

¹ Results will be published in 2006. <<http://iareh.usask.ca/research.php>>.

² The term “dinosaurs” was used by several interviewees.

³ In October 2005, Weyerhaeuser announced the closure of its pulp and paper mill in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan.

⁴ This income level is based on Statistics Canada data and represents all agricultural industries including producers and food manufacturing industries.

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* Some of these papers are still in progress and not all titles are finalized.