

**Labour situation and strategies
of farm woman in diversified
rural areas of Europe**

Executive summary

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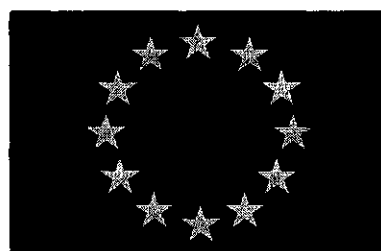
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DEMETRA



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EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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FARM WOMEN IN DIVERSIFIED RURAL AREAS
OF EUROPE**
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1. Introduction

At the end of the 20th century, several trends in Europe influence employment, family relations and the personal lives of women in rural areas. More women are shifting a part of their work from the domestic context into a labour market context. Since changes in rural areas are initiated both by the restructuring of agriculture and the expansion of other sectors, it might be asked how women working in agriculture have perceived these changes and how they have coped with them.

This executive summary presents the results of the final report 1), which explain the labour situation of farm women in different rural areas in Europe, based on case-studies and comparative analyses carried out during 1995-1997 (see the annex for an overview of the reports). The study was a joint effort between research institutes in Greece (Agricultural University of Athens: Sophia Efstratoglou), Italy (CRES: Elena Saraceno), the Netherlands (LEI-DLO: Greet Overbeek) and Norway (Centre for Rural Research: Marit S. Haugen), co-ordinated by LEI-DLO.

The study aimed to analyze factors relevant for the labour participation of farm women, and their strategies to improve their socio-economic integration, which might be realized both by working on and off farm. The following research objectives have been formulated:

1. To analyze the factors in the local context that influence the labour participation of women in general;
2. To describe the labour situation of farm women and to analyze the factors that influence their labour participation on and off farm;
3. To identify the labour strategies of farm women;
4. To evaluate the labour situation of farm women and the constraints and opportunities in the study area and to develop recommendations that might improve the socio-economic integration of farm women.

The summary starts with an overview of the methodology (2), followed by the context of the study areas, the labour situation and the labour strategies of farm women (3). For each study area, the constraints and opportunities to increase the economic activity of women, and the strengths and weaknesses in the labour situation of farm women will be summarized (4). To indicate the perspectives for increasing the economic activity of women, trends in rural areas and in the labour situation of farm women will be reported (5). Finally, recommendations which might contribute to the socio-economic integration of farm women in the society, will be presented (6).

1) Overbeek, G., S. Efstratoglou, M.S. Haugen and E. Saraceno (1998): *Labour Situation and Strategies of Farm Women in Diversified Rural Areas of Europe*. Brussels, Commission of the European Communities, Directorate General of Agriculture

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2. Methodology

Research management

The research objectives have been realized in three phases. The context analysis of phase 1 describes and interprets the present and recent evaluation of factors that have been hypothesized as relevant in affecting the labour situation of women living in rural regions. By context we mean the unique combination in a given place of the factors related to: 1. economic structure and the labour demand; 2. social structure and the labour supply; 3. physical and social infrastructure; 4. economic and social policies; and 5. cultural identity.

In phase 2, the level of analysis shifts from context factors to individual factors obtained through empirical research of our own. The target group of research is now farm women. The analysis of individual factors and strategies has been divided into two sub-phases. Phase 2a presents a static perspective based on the current labour situation of farm women, while phase 2b presents the dynamic perspective. It provides an in-depth understanding of the results found in phase 2a, by examining the labour strategies of farm women at different stages of their life. Further, the focus changes from 'objective' factors to women's own perception of the factors influencing their labour situation.

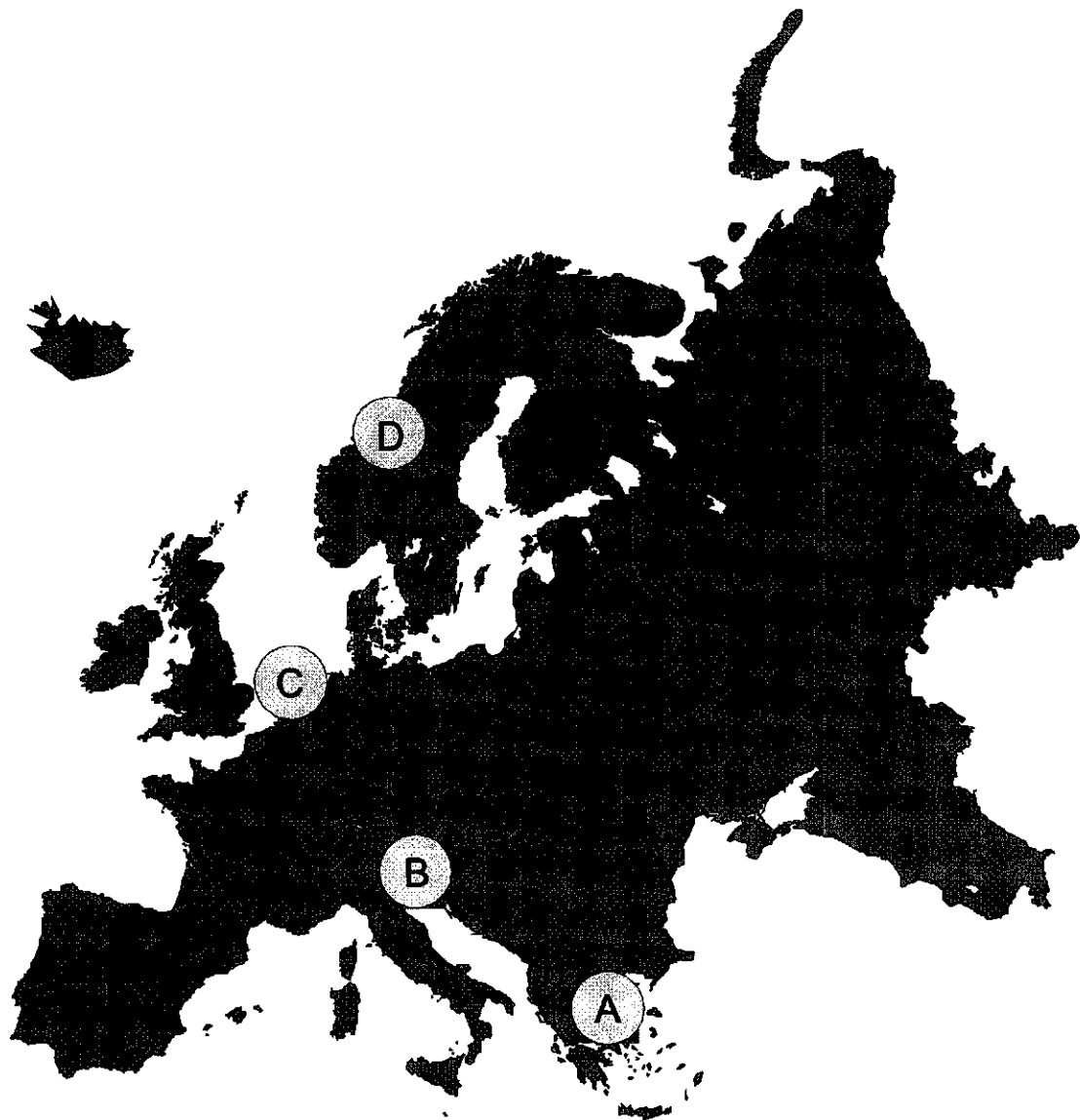
Phase 2a provides evidence on the labour situation of farm women and identifies factors at an individual level that promote or impede their participation in the labour market. The factors that are assumed to identify the strengths and weaknesses for participating in the labour market on and off farm are related to: 1. human capital of farm women; 2. household structures; 3. farm structures; 4. external structures; and 5. labour orientation and motivation of farm women.

Phase 2b traces how farm women perceive their labour situation and expands knowledge about the labour strategies adopted at various stages of their lives as well as their work aspirations. This phase explores women's views of their alternatives and choices at crucial moments in their lives during periods in which contexts have been changing. For that purpose life-stories have been used to analyze different periods of women's life (childhood and youth, adult life and the present situation).

Phase 3 analyses the opportunities to increase employment in the study areas and women's perception of the possibility of increasing income generating activities. Therefore, factors at a contextual level, constraints and opportunities, and at an individual level (strengths and weaknesses) are related to each other. After an elaboration of the trends to indicate whether the relevant factors will increase or decrease in importance, recommendations are developed in order to help increase women's income generating activities.

Study areas

The research includes study areas in Greece, Italy, the Netherlands and Norway (figure 1). To compare the study areas, the concept of diversification has been used, which assumes that more employment opportunities outside agriculture will increase the activity of men and



- A** Greece: Fthiotis
- B** Italy: Udine
- C** The Netherlands: Groningen, IJssel-Vecht
North Holland North, North and Central Limburg
- D** Norway: Nord-Trøndelag

Figure 1 Location of the study areas in Europe

women. The study areas are distinguished by the main sector of employment 2). Within the study areas, sub-areas and communities have been classified as more diversified, if there was relatively less farm land.

Fthiotis (mainly agriculture) is located in the middle of Greece, 200-270 km north of Athens. It is a less diversified NUTSIII area, with EU-objective 1 status and a population density of 39 residents/km². Most of its population lives in rural communities with less than 5,000 residents. The selected study area has an average level of development for Greek rural areas. Within the study area less and more diversified communities have been distinguished.

Udine (mainly industries) is in the north-east of Italy. It is a NUTSIII area, with two thirds of the study area having an EU-objective 5b status, which implies that the diversification is less advanced than elsewhere. It has a population density of 107 residents/km², with half of the population living in rural areas. The study area has an above average level of development for Italian rural areas, mainly based on the model of diffused industrialization. Within the study area less and more diversified communities have been distinguished.

In the Netherlands (mainly market services), rural areas are to an increasing extent 'rurban' fields. Four non-contiguous sub-areas have been selected with a higher share of farm workers and a lower population density (218-408 residents/km²) than national figures. Two sub-areas are rural (Groningen: less diversified and IJssel-Vecht: diversified) and two are urban (North-Holland north: diversified and North and Central Limburg: more diversified). They include one or more NUTSIII areas and have some communities with an EU-objective 5b status.

The fourth study area is located in the middle of Norway, in the county of Nord-Trøndelag (mainly community, social and personal services). It has a population density of 6 residents/km², similar to other regions with an EU-Objective 6 status. There are only three centres with more than 10,000 residents. Within the county of Nord-Trøndelag, two non-contiguous sub-areas have been chosen. The diversified sub-area coincides with one community (Stjørdal), while the less diversified sub-area in Namdal consists of 6 communities. The selected study area is representative for rural development in Norway.

Most study areas have a greater contribution of agriculture in the employment structure than the national average (except Udine), and they are predominantly rural (except the Netherlands where agriculture is found more often in urban regions). The patterns of diversification are quite different. If we use the appearance of cats to illustrate the differences and consider black as 'less diversified', and white as 'more diversified', the Fthiotis cat is a black one with a white chest and some white socks. Most of the employment is in the main town and in some small towns, while it is scarce in the other parts of the area. The Udine cat is a black one with many white spots, indicating that the employment opportunities are more distributed among the area. The Dutch cat is more a white one with some black spots, indicating a relatively short distance between the locations of employment. Finally, the Nord-Trøndelag cat is rather a grey one with a white chest, which refers to the employment in the urban centre and the relatively large distance between the other locations of employment.

2) The employment structure is based on the following sectors: Agriculture (0): Agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing; Industries (1-5): Mining and quarrying, manufacturing, electricity, gas and water, construction; Services (6-8): Wholesale and retail trade, restaurants and hotels, transport, storage and communication, finance, insurance, real estate and business services; Services (9): Community, social and personal services.

Farm women

Farm women are defined as women living with a farmer or managing a farm themselves. They are younger than 55 years. Since older women grew up in a quite different context from younger women, we have distinguished women born before 1956 as 'older' women (40 years and older) and the other group as 'younger' women. Several ways of data collection have been used among farm women. For phase 2a, in the southern study areas face-to-face interviews were carried out among a selected sample of 150 women. In the northern study areas a postal survey was conducted among a random sample of 400-500 women. Generally four out of ten sampled women are younger than 40. Afterwards, for phase 2b in each study area 20 sampled farm women have been interviewed, equally divided between younger and older women with different labour situations (see below).

For the main dependent variable, the labour situation of farm women, a classificatory variable has been used. Based on the labour input of women in income generating activities on and off farm, four groups have been distinguished:

1. Mainly working on farm (more than 50 days/year or 8 hours/week farm work).
2. Mainly working off farm (more than 50 days/year or 8 hours/week off-farm work).
3. Pluriactive (more than 50 days/year or 8 hours/week for both on and off-farm work).
4. Housewives (less than 50 days/year or 8 hours/week for both on and off-farm work).

3. Main results

Context of the study areas

1. In general, employment opportunities are positively related to the density of population, spatial integration of rural areas with urban centres, and diversification of activities in the service sector of the economy. As the rural context loses a strong specialization in farming activities, the experience of the four study areas shows that with significant differences, it did not lose attractiveness but on the contrary gained it. This is due to the available local human and economic resources for finding alternatives which would not imply leaving the region and to the attention that the new functions of rural areas are developing for the rest of society.
2. Although the employment opportunities increase with the level of diversification, they are hardly related to the activity of men and women. In all study areas the activity of men was nearly similar (between 75% and 81%), while the activity of women was highly different among the study areas (30% in Fthiotis, 45% in Udine, 47% in the Netherlands and 69% in Nord-Trøndelag). While in Fthiotis the fewer numbers of active women could be attributed to the lower level of diversification, differences in the activity of women in the other study areas are more related to the extent older women are active. A lower activity of older women coincides with the way interrelations between the market, family and state discourage women to combine domestic work and care with paid work on an equal basis compared to men. Those interrelations are visible in both past and present developments, like the support women got for a professional education and the number of paid care services respectively.
3. Contrary to the economic activity as such, the concept of diversification explained well to what extent women are satisfied with their level of activity. Compared to the

diversified sub-areas, there is more underemployment of women in the less diversified sub-areas. More women would increase their activity, but the employment prospects were less favourable to achieve this, which is also illustrated by the higher out-migration in those areas.

4. Services is a more important sector of employment for women compared to men. A reduction or decline of this sector would severely affect job opportunities for women since both the primary and the secondary sector show in all study areas a higher level of discrimination against women for regular work. Location (distance) of service jobs appears a relevant factor in less diversified study areas and in more diversified study areas, if they are concentrated in an urban centre.
5. Population trends and labour supply are different in the study areas and even more so at sub-area level. Less diversified sub-areas and communities have lost population in terms of negative migration flows while more diversified sub-areas and communities have had positive migration balances. The less diversified (sub-)areas show a population which increases significantly with age and higher unemployment rates for women than in diversified areas.
6. Social and economic infrastructures were considered relatively adequate in most contexts. In relation to services for the population, childcare facilities and old age assistance were present in all study areas except in Fthiotis. In the southern study areas the demand for such services was still low, while in the northern study areas this demand was increasing. Differences in the demand for those paid services could be related to extent women aim for paid work, to the cost of such services, and to the cultural preference for informal care by relatives within the household. Job employment agencies are not widely diffused and appear inadequate in relation to women's demand, of whom many are unfamiliar with formal ways of entering the labour market.
7. Economic and social policies appear to be different in the study areas and have been interpreted differently regarding their impact on farm women. Self-employment is a frequent status of women in the southern study areas, but carries everywhere lower social benefits and very low payments. Gender policies have been very weak and have been introduced quite recently under the equal opportunities initiative. They are hardly implemented in agricultural and in rural policies, except in Nord-Trøndelag where rural policies have facilitated the activity of women and the liveability of the region.

Labour situation and strategies of farm women

7. Consistent with the increase of diversification, the share of farm women in the regional workforce decreases. Changing from the regional labour patterns to individual labour patterns of farm women, we see this trend repeated in most study areas. In Fthiotis (mainly agriculture) the majority of women work mainly on farm, while in the sub-areas of Nord-Trøndelag (mainly community, social and personal services) the majority of women work off farm.

Table 1 Labour situation of farm women in the study areas (in %)

	Greece (Fthiotis)	Italy (Udine)	The Netherlands (N, E, W, S)	Norway (Nord-Trøndelag)
Mainly on farm	63	40	65	30
Mainly off farm	14	29	8	38
Pluriactive	11	14	11	23
Housewife	12	17	16	9
Total (N)	100 (155)	100 (150)	100 (496)	100 (424)

Source: Phase 2a national reports of the DEMETRA research for Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway 1996.

The exception to this trend is women in the sub-areas of the Netherlands. Despite the diversified structure, women work more often on farm, which might be attributed to the concentration of the labour demand in agriculture caused by the competitiveness of that sector. Agricultural and town and country policies, investment conditions, entrepreneurial and inheritance culture have favoured farms that deliver a full-time income and discouraged part-time farms. This has resulted in farms with a larger size and a greater labour demand.

9. Most farm women work part-time or seasonally on farm or off farm, whereas their spouses or partners more often work full-time on or off farm. There is often homogeneity between the working place of women and men, excluding in Udine. Thus, if women work mainly on (off) farm, it is likely that men will do this too. In all four study areas women mention predominantly instrumental reasons for working on farm (to contribute to the family income, to solve the workload on farm, to build up the farm). Despite the majority of women has a farm background, few women have inherited farms. Most women have entered into entrepreneurial farm activities through marriage, and do not intend to pursue farm careers.
10. Participation of women in farm work is related to both the farm production and the management of the farm business (administration, serving visitors and hired labour, doing errands and so on). The latter 'farm household related' tasks are often overlooked in statistical measurements, because of their association with domestic tasks and the neglect of farm service tasks caused by external integration, which implies buying more inputs and thus more need for information and communication flows.
11. Despite the new functions rural areas are developing for the rest of society, other farm-based activities appear infrequent in the study areas. The type of activities that women participate in mostly are traditional activities and concern retailing and processing of farm products, while policy promoted activities such as agrotourism, handicrafts etc. seem not to have achieved significant levels in the study areas, except in Nord-Trøndelag. It might be asked to what extent influencing factors (like territorial integrated strategies and cooperation strategies between the different actors) or non-influencing factors (like rural amenities) are responsible for the relatively small number of women with new other farm-based activities. The influencing factors might be improved, because most activities were supply oriented, lacking marketing and co-

operation strategies to reach new groups of consumers (who are willing to pay for higher value).

12. Differences in off-farm work reflect the opportunities women are faced with in the labour market and their abilities to exploit them. In the northern study areas women often work in professional caring and teaching functions, with an average journey to work of 13 km, mainly by car. In the southern study areas, most jobs are lower skilled such as cleaning, sewing, hairdressing, catering and shop retail functions, and most women work nearby home. Thus, women with more qualifications and skills, aim for the primary segments of the labour market and the boundaries of the labour market are broader compared to women with lower skills and qualifications who are confined to their community and to its lower segments. Predominantly instrumental reasons are mentioned for doing off-farm work, but in the northern study areas more women emphasize social or expressive reasons (to use personal abilities and to get in touch with other people). The latter might be attributed to the fact that more women were prepared to follow a professional labour perspective.
13. Non-paid activities off farm (voluntary work) are done by women in all study areas. They refer to the care for children (at school and in organizations) rural, cultural and religious activities. Although those tasks might be less visible and unpaid, often they imply an important contribution to the social cohesion in rural communities. Further, 'voluntary work', particularly in care services and cultural organizations etc., implies a potential labour demand by the society, which under specific conditions may explicitly take the form of off-farm opportunities (local employment contracts).
14. Going from the study areas in Greece to Norway, women spend less time on domestic work. In the northern study areas, predominantly women working off farm spend less time on domestic work. This might be attributed to more externalization of domestic tasks, mechanization of domestic work, and a reallocation of domestic work among family members, because those women more often reported assistance by their partners and children. This is not so clear in Udine and absent in Fthiotis. Also, prevailing values with regard to women's roles are important. They show that most women in the southern study areas agree that 'a married woman should be responsible for domestic work even with a job outside', a view which the majority of women in the northern study areas reject.
15. In most study areas women working on farm are casual workers. In the southern study areas just a minority of women gets recognition for their participation in income generating activities. Compared to their actual labour input they are less often registered as a (co-)head and their contribution is not explicitly reported in income and social security terms. In the northern study areas, more women have an income of at least 10,000 ECU for working on farm, but only in the Netherlands women are registered as paid workers. The presence of other farm-based activities had little influence on the labour status of women, and did not contribute to more economic independence of women. Despite women's better entitlements to farm income, women's work is often under-valued compared to men's work in terms of the number of hours and the qualifications for work. Further, their social security entitlement is lower than that of their partners.
16. Off farm, more women are registered as paid workers. In the northern study areas

nearly all women working off farm are employees with a fixed labour contract. Only in the sub-areas of Nord-Trøndelag the majority of women earn more than 10,000 ECU, which might be attributed to women's higher number of work hours compared to women in the sub-areas of the Netherlands. In the southern study areas only a minority earn an income of at least 10,000 ECU. While in Udine the majority of women are employees with a fixed labour contract, in Fthiotis most women are self-employed or assisting family members, and most workers do not have any paid contract and entitlement to income and social security.

17. In both the less diversified study area Fthiotis and the more diversified sub-areas in the Netherlands, the majority of women consider farming to be the main source of family income. This shows that also in diversified regions, there might be employment opportunities in agriculture based on external integration with up- and down-stream branches. In the other diversified study areas in Udine and Nord-Trøndelag, more women and their partners work part-time on farm, while they earn their main source of income outside. In Udine only a minority of women consider agriculture as the main source of income, while in the sub-areas of Nord-Trøndelag half of the women do this. In all study areas, income from other farm-based activities was only additional.
18. Women working mainly on farm do this on larger farms and with more labour intensive production indicating a higher labour demand. Those women have fewer qualifications to deal with the segmentation of the labour market outside agriculture and they are often older. In Fthiotis women working mainly on farm often partly represent hidden unemployment. Further, women in Udine and older women in the northern study areas consider low skilled and physically demanding work outside to represent a low status. The idea that women should qualify themselves in order to achieve paid work in the long term is absent. Contrary to this, many younger women in the northern study areas prefer working on farm, because it allows a more flexible combination with childcare than a job outside, while they consider their labour status equal to that of many other employees.
19. Women working mainly off farm hold similar qualifications to other employed women in the region, which are higher than that of women between 15-65 years without paid work. Those women are often on smaller and labour extensive farms. Consistent with the increase of education opportunities, those women are often younger, excluding women in the sub-areas of Nord-Trøndelag who have already been prepared for a longer time to participate in the labour market. In the northern study areas women more often have a job in the primary segment of the labour market than women in the southern study areas.
20. Pluriactive farm women are different in the southern and northern study areas. In the southern study areas, they more often work in low-skilled casual jobs than in regular jobs. A vocational training is less often a necessity for women who tend to be similar to women working mainly on farm. Contrary to this, in the northern study areas the type of jobs of pluriactive women hardly differs from women working mainly off farm.
21. In all four study areas, women who mainly work as housewives are a heterogeneous group. They are partly younger women who do not intend to combine the care for

children with a significant labour input on or off farm, and partly older women, who have adjusted to this role or who have difficulties in finding work off farm.

22. Differences in the labour situation of farm women and relevant factors like education and mobility opportunities, are reflected in women's youth until they find their first job. In the southern study areas women left school at a young age. Most women did not manage to fulfil their work aspirations, because there were financial constraints to support their education, traditional values towards women's roles in the labour market and lack of social infrastructure. In the sub-areas of Nord-Trøndelag women's youth seems to be longer than in any other study area. Most women started their first job at the age of 18-19, had fewer constraints on geographical and residential mobility, experienced some years on their own and they had more opportunities to choose and plan their own lives.
23. Besides the length of youth, the turning points which influence the labour situation of women are also different. In Fthiotis and Udine marriage is a turning point, which means the abandonment of personal professional aspirations which are overtaken by family priorities and needs. In the sub-areas of the Netherlands getting children is reported as a turning point, while in the sub-areas of Nord-Trøndelag less significant turning points are found. The turning points are more important for less educated women, while educated women managed to combine professional work aspirations with family needs. Further, the turning points indicate that in the southern study areas and to a lesser extent also in the Netherlands, the labour strategies of farm women are mainly *life-cycle* strategies, while the strategies of farm women in the study area of Norway tend to become *lifelong* labour strategies.
24. The trend from life-cycle strategies to lifelong strategies is not only visible in the cross-sectional analysis between the study areas, but also in a comparison of younger and older women. Older women had a shorter youth and fewer opportunities for education and mobility than younger women, who had more general education and time to choose a profession. More younger women tend to follow a lifelong labour strategy, and to discuss the division of domestic work.
25. The findings in the labour situation of farm women might be relevant for most women in the less diversified study areas, where farm women represent a significant share of the rural women. In the diversified study areas, farm women are just a small minority of the rural workforce, which implies that their labour situation is less representative for women in general. In all study areas, the reason why farm women have a job outside might be considered similar to other rural women. The main difference between farm women and other women is that farm women in addition to their domestic work participate in farm activities, whereas other rural women more often will be mainly a housewife.

4. Relevant factors to increase women's economic activity in each study area

In this section the constraints and opportunities in the local context to increase women's economic activity and the strengths and weaknesses in the labour situation of farm women to realize this, will be summarized.

Fthiotis

The main opportunities for women in rural areas are the increase in services, particularly market services and the prospects of rural tourism. However, the lack of networks and associations to inform women about the employment opportunities and the inadequate training system that does not provide women with marketable skills, are important constraints. The shift towards a more market and demand-oriented type of production in agriculture (horticulture, organic farming and local products) both at the level of farms and at the level of agricultural processing units is positive for women. However, it will require more technical skills for farm women particularly in agricultural production. Further, many other women still have to cope with the negative income prospects of traditional productions (cotton, tobacco, cereals), which have often a too small size for an economic labour demand.

For farm women family networks provide childcare assistance. The low qualifications and skills, and limited geographical labour mobility imply that women refer only at the secondary labour market in their own community. This problem becomes more acute for farm women in mountainous areas with poor public transport and a non-diversified context, who remain in farming because of the lack of alternative employment. Because of that, (younger) women tend to leave the mountain areas. A minority of women with more qualifications manage to exploit better job opportunities outside and to integrate their professional aspirations into the family objectives. In the other cases women work more often on farm, also because family priorities are put above their professional aspirations.

Udine

Despite the diversified employment structure women's activity is at a much lower level than that of men in rural areas. This might be attributed both to the relative low incidence of services which employ the majority of women and to the way how market, family and state discourage women to combine domestic work and care with paid work and to participate on an equal basis compared to men. New employment opportunities for women are predominantly for employees in export-oriented agriculture, manufacturing, retail sale, and community, personal and social services.

Many women work partially off farm. Family networks support the labour participation of younger farm women with assistance in child raising, but reduce the labour participation of older women. Extended families are frequently found in farm households. Little or no payment for farm women's work is the origin of its low attractiveness to women. The farming background and the low level of education restrict women to jobs in the secondary labour market. Vocational training does not seem to influence effectively the labour strategies of farm women, who appear to choose their education without reference to the specific aspects of local demand. For younger women, mechanization has reduced the demand for low-skilled and casual labour on the farm. Off farm, a stable income is considered more important than professional satisfaction. Dependence on family, friends

and employment networks in a narrow area restricts women's spatial scope and information channels for finding a better job.

The Netherlands

In the sub-areas of the Netherlands, the recent increase in activity of women in rural areas coincides with the increase of part-time employment in public and private services and the rising education and mobility opportunities of women. The new opportunities are predominantly found in (retail) trade, hotels and restaurants, and in financial and business services, which respectively attract less and well-educated women. However, similar to Udine the economic activity of women is much lower than that of men in rural areas, which might be attributed to the way market, family and state discouraged women to do this on an equal basis. The employment prospects for women in intensive agriculture based on high inputs and high outputs seem to be more favourable than in agriculture based on local land use, as long as this complies with environmental and health regulations.

The labour situation of farm women is quite different from other women in the region, because most farm women are less able to comply with the conditions of a segmented labour market outside. Although farming provides a flexible combination of paid work and care, younger women desire a more strategic use of their qualifications. Despite the greater influence of professional skills on the labour strategies of farm women, those qualifications are still under-used, because the unequal division of care and domestic work is hardly discussed and farming provides still enough income, which make a change less urgent.

Nord-Trøndelag

The shift from informal to paid care services and the increase of teaching services in the last decades have contributed significantly to the economic activity of women. Regional policies, strongly focused on maintaining employment and services for the rural population, have included also gender issues in their implementation. Due to gender segregation, women's employment in rural areas is more dependent on and vulnerable to changes in public community, social and personal services. The social infrastructure in the more and less diversified sub-areas seems to be fairly equal, although access regarding distances and transport are poorer in the less diversified sub-area.

Most women work off farm due to a long-term labour strategy to realize marketable professional skills and an adequate level of physical and cultural mobility during the course of their whole life. Young women are interested in farming, but the labour demand on farm is often too small to generate income for women. In most cases the professional aspirations of women coincide with their family priorities, due to an externalization of care tasks and more recognition of the need for women to be economically active. However, the labour demand in the less diversified sub-area often results in under-employment of women, because there are not enough jobs satisfying the qualifications of women and their preferred number of work hours.

5. Trends in the labour situation and preferred changes by farm women

1. More employment in services

The case studies stress the importance of community, personal and social services for the economic activity of women in rural areas. There are many informal services delivered by women to the family and community. Given the need of the government to reduce budget deficits in most study areas, a strong reliance on public services may become a handicap. Since the boundaries between the providers of (health-)care, welfare, domestic and security services are blurring and they are no longer only a matter of households themselves or mainly delivered by the state, they might create new employment that legalizes family, neighbourhood or black work services. In line with the policy to facilitate economic development, and more migration to rural areas, the labour demand in those services is expected to increase. Also hotel and restaurants, trade, financial and business services might contribute to the increase of services. The number of jobs might increase by both public-private agreements and private enterprises.

2. Increasing service tasks on farm

The intensification of agriculture, predominantly in horticulture and indoor livestock, has contributed to new employment opportunities for women. Both the intensification of farming and the orientation towards a new demand of consumers (more organic farming and local products) have resulted in new products. New product innovations were less visible in other farm-based activities, which are mostly supply oriented, lacking marketing and co-operation strategies and for which the income contribution is relatively small. More service tasks on farm might be expected due to more purchased inputs (which results in more administration, management and co-ordination) and a more market oriented production in agricultural and other farm-based activities (which results in more marketing, networks and public relations). This will create employment for women, if images, qualifications and income help to modernize the perception of the new opportunities in agriculture and women's contribution to this.

3. Enlargement of the local economy

In the study areas, the available physical and social infrastructure appears not to be a relevant factor, which influences the labour situation of women. More important are the opportunities of the rural population to reach them, which is quite divergent among residents. The transition of rural areas into areas for global production and consumption, and the scale-enlargement of social life implies that many women do not spend the whole day in their own community. More often they will need a car to cover a distance, which might restrict the mobility of women who can not afford one. The ability and propensity of women to cope with the enlargement of the functional local economy, also by use of Internet, seems to coincide more with education and the income women will earn than with the available infrastructure as such.

Similar with the willingness of women to commute, it might be expected that also the use of care facilities is not an objective on its own, but related to the labour strategies of women on the long term, the costs for childcare in relation to the income of women (and men), the location and opening hours of the childcare facilities, the value of parental care,

the importance of an environment with more playmates of the same age if the family has few children etc.

Preferred changes

To relate the relevant trends to the labour situation preferred by farm women, in all study areas, women working mainly off farm more often realized their professional work aspirations and show the highest satisfaction with their labour situation. Thus, the trends in the employment structure, which show an increase in services, might be considered beneficial for women. To a large extent the taking up of off-farm work reflects the changing roles of women in contemporary society and the rise of multiple income earning couples.

Women working mainly on farm are more often satisfied with their labour situation in the northern study areas, but less often in the southern study areas. This difference might be attributed to the opportunities women have to be registered as paid workers on farm and to existing images of women as professional farmers, which are more positive in the northern study areas. Housewives are more satisfied in the southern study areas, where the ideology of feminine domesticity is more important than in the northern study areas. In all study areas, pluriactive women perceive the situation as being overworked, and would like to decrease their work on farm (in the southern study areas), or prefer to stop working off farm (more often in the northern study areas). However, if we sum up the effects of all the preferences, in most study areas the pluriactivity of women will increase, because more women are tending to combine their work on (off) farm with work off (on) farm.

It might be stressed that, except in Fthiotis, most women are not willing to change their labour situation, even if they do not get any remuneration for their labour. In Fthiotis, many women would like to find a job off farm reflecting the high female labour reserve and the ongoing exodus from farming. In the sub-areas of Nord-Trøndelag, more women prefer to change their outside jobs. Despite their education and work experience outside, in the sub-areas of the Netherlands younger women prefer to substitute their work off farm for more work on farm. Since the objective of research is to support the socio-economic integration of women by increasing employment, we will focus on the women who would like to improve their employment on and off farm and the requirements to realize this.

On farm

The main factors why women work on farm are for the time being hardly related to the choice of an agricultural profession, but rather with the fact that education and age often act as barriers to exclude women from off-farm work. The majority of women working mainly on farm are less educated and older than 40 years. Hardly any women prepared themselves by taking agricultural vocational training. More women followed agricultural courses after they married a farmer, predominantly courses for farm wives or 'starters' about socio-economic subjects, administration and working with cattle or crops. This occurred more often in the northern than southern study areas, where the supply of agricultural courses has still to be developed. It might be asked why women do not improve their agricultural qualifications similar to their partners by following courses in management, marketing, agricultural and rural policies and so on.

In the northern study areas more women would like to increase their labour input on farm, which seems to be more an option than an obligation for them, because better (agriculturally) educated women would also like to do this. It is likely that farming is considered a better option for integrating paid work and childcare, and to find a balance

between professional and private life. In most study areas, women expect to increase their labour input by starting a new activity and thus increasing the labour demand on farm, predominantly women in the less diversified study areas in Fthiotis and Nord-Trøndelag where other employment is less available. The new activities appear to be predominantly other farm-based activities instead of agricultural productions, except for the sub-areas in the Netherlands where women expect to be more involved in the agricultural productions.

If we consider the requirements of women who would like to start new activities on the farm, they are predominantly an improvement of skills through more advice and education. In the second place, there are financial resources needed and the support of the family.

Off farm

Contrary to women working mainly on farm, the reasons why women work off farm are strongly related to their choice of profession. Hence, the women who obtained a job off farm are better educated and more mobile than the other women who would like to increase or to find work off farm. Predominantly the lack of education and vocational training in marketable skills are important constraints for women who would like to increase or search for work off farm, and in some study areas also the lack of driving ability (Fthiotis). Family constraints for childcare and high emphasis on parental care, are mainly existing in the sub-areas of the Netherlands.

The requirements of women to work off farm are predominantly an increase in jobs, mostly low-skilled jobs with a flexible work-time. In the second place, women consider the support from the family an important requirement, while just in third place they mention an improvement of labour skills. In the sub-areas of Nord-Trøndelag more women will need further education and training, but in Udine women hardly stress this requirement. These findings might be consistent with the bargaining power to maintain or achieve personal aspirations, and experience with a competitive labour market that requires an updating of qualifications.

Often women who search for a job outside have the characteristics of a latent labour supply. They do not have a recent labour market experience, and do not have ideas about the available occupations that might fit in with their desire to earn an income, not far from home. Those women are rather passive in searching for employment, predominantly in Fthiotis and in the sub-areas of the Netherlands. In the other study areas, where relatively more women work off farm, women more often asked for information about employment opportunities and had applied for a job in the last year. Only a minority of women who would like to change/have a job is registered as unemployed, excluding women in Udine where regional authorities seem to have developed a vested interest in showing high unemployment rates in order to justify the need for policies. In the other study areas women are rather discouraged from registering themselves, because they are not entitled to any unemployment benefit, if they did not lose a job, or more commonly women consider it useless as it will not create more jobs for them.

The lack of vocational training is not only an individual weakness, but also a contextual constraint in the southern areas, where the increase of services in rural areas just has started and the supply of vocational training is not related to the expected labour demand. Therefore, it is important to develop an adequate qualification structure for those branches where an increase of jobs might be expected, to inform employers and *hidden* unemployed about this by stronger links with local agencies, in which they usually

participate, and last but not least, to achieve a better matching between labour demand and supply.

6. Requirements for increasing activity of farm women

The results have shown that in the less diversified study areas (Fthiotis), farm women are constrained by the decrease of agriculture. Contrary to this, in the diversified study areas farm women already contribute to diminish the vulnerability for changes in agricultural policies, because they work outside (Udine and Nord-Trøndelag) or work on farms with productions less dependent on EU-income policies (the Netherlands). Despite those developments, the labour conditions of women working on farm are still under-valued, while farm women have relatively less opportunities to realize a substantial income by other activities on farm or a job off farm. Both to support the strengthening of individual capacities as well as the development of new job opportunities are key issues for expanding farm women labour participation in rural areas, both less and more diversified.

Although to a different extent, more governments become aware that their role in the rural development process might rather be a facilitating one than an initiating one, and that a social diversity of the beneficiaries is one of the key issues for being successful in achieving this. Therefore, the potential contribution of women to rural development might be more explored.

The following requirements are recommended in agricultural policies to strengthen the position of women working on farm:

1. *Professionalize the labour situation of women on farm*

The vocational training (courses) and advice channels to support women's work in new activities on the farm and in farm management might be more developed (southern study areas) or could be more communicated to farm women if they exist already for other target groups (northern study areas). In both the southern and northern study areas, they should be focused not so much on the labour position of women as farm wives, but rather to the expected labour demand of the farm business to respond to new market conditions and consumers requirements. They might encourage the (electronic) mobility of farm women by using other languages and Internet for information and communication.

Women who contribute to a reasonable farm income, should be also entitled individually to income and social security. The labour status as a partner has to be legalized and implemented as a function. This implies that the taxable income, social security and qualifications should be consistent with each other, instead of choosing only one aspect and neglecting the other ones. Such a function profile is also relevant for women who are assistant to allow them to get a taxable income and a social security.

2. *Promote equal opportunities in structural policies*

To promote equal opportunities in structural policies, effects of policies should be more often calculated as effects per worker instead of effects per farm. Rights and duties derived from structural policies should be related to all regular family workers instead to only the oldest head. To encourage new perspectives on the farm, it is relevant to consider the qualifications of all workers with a substantial contribution,

while support for investment in agricultural productions should contribute that all workers have suitable labour conditions and qualifications.

For farm women who would like to find/increase their work outside, it is recommended that rural and regional policies relevant for women contribute to:

3. *Increasing opportunities to pay services in rural areas*

Women already carry out much of the unacknowledged domestic and voluntary work that contributes families and communities to survive. It has to be searched to what extent services to care for elderly and children, and other personal care (like doing errands and odd jobs in the house, care for home-animals, gardens, catering and so on) could be professionalised and paid, also because they induce many low-skilled jobs for women. The organization of those services might be based on existing networks (like family networks, neighbourhood, and community co-operation) and might sooner combine different services than specialize in one type of service. Both social partners and regional development agencies might create those services, predominantly for hidden unemployed, while more general policies might induce demand from consumers.

4. *Realize a better allocation between demand and supply of labour qualifications*

In order to respond to the changes in employment and to prepare women to update their qualifications, it is important that the employment agencies give more priority to analyzing the expected labour demand in the near future. Predominantly in the southern study areas they should adapt their facilities towards employment prospects, and on an equal basis for women and men. Besides courses to update the qualifications, it is also relevant to improve the channels to inform women about the functioning and prospects of the labour market in the region and to increase the opportunities for more (electronic) mobility of rural residents. In Fthiotis, the support to get a license will increase the mobility of women to reach new labour markets. In all study areas, more know-how about information technology might be a tool for increasing women's opportunities in the labour market, but in any case useful for rural women who live further away from economic centres. Therefore, employment agencies and regional governments should give attention to support the mobility of less educated residents to improve their socio-economic integration.

The proposed recommendations are applied to each study area (see final report). To elaborate the recommendations further, it is important to what extent policy makers consider women being human resources who may add new qualifications and experiences to realize the rural development objectives. For women, it will be relevant to participate more in rural development processes. Since the number of full-time income farms is tending to decrease, employment outside will become more often the main source of income and more women will contribute to this family income. Therefore, a lifelong labour strategy might be more communicated among farm women and their families to encourage them to continue their labour market experience and to update their qualifications.

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- B** Italië: Udine
- C** Nederland: Groningen, IJssel-Vecht
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- D** Noorwegen: Nord-Trøndelag