



In Her Boots

MOSES

Rural Women's Project

While the total number of farms has been on the decline for years, farms owned and operated by women is on the rise: women farmers increased in number over twenty percent over the last twenty years according to the Census of Agriculture. Women launching small-scale, sustainable, locally focused enterprises are driving this increase in new women-owned farms. Additionally, the number of women-owned companies across all industries increased by 68% from 1997 to 2014 — a rate 1½ times the national average, according to the 2014 State of Women Owned Business Report.

As the number of both women-owned businesses and farms climb, opportunity abounds for women of all backgrounds, ages and interests to launch ventures in sustainable and organic agriculture that both support the planet and transform our food system. This growing number of women “ecopreneurs” build successful farm-based livelihoods around their passion for conservation, community and leaving this world a better place. Some of these women traded urban roots for the rural lifestyle while others are recrafting the family farm they grew up with, sharing a passion to help others connect with healthy food and farmers that steward the land.

This positive growth of women farmers comes after decades of discrimination and lack of representation. The USDA currently is in the process of settling claims from women farmers for past-denied farm loans because of gender discrimination. Women therefore qualify as “socially disadvantaged farmers” (SDA) within some USDA programs, such as the Farm Service Agency (FSA) targeting a portion of specific farm loan funds to women and other such historically underserved groups.

Accessing resources specifically for women in sustainable and organic agriculture has historically been a barrier. Since 2009, the award-winning MOSES Rural Women's Project uniquely addresses these needs and is one of the few year-round programs dedicated to the organic community of female farmers.

The MOSES Rural Women's Project supports women farmers and food-based ecopreneurs with resources, training networking and collaborative opportunities to launch and run successful farm businesses. The Rural Women's Project is based on the documented model that women farmers learn best from each other in a peer-led format. Through programming based on collaboration and building local connections, the Rural Women's Project brings together women passionate about transforming our food systems on all levels. Rural Women's Project events particularly support beginning female farmers: approximately 60% of In Her Boots workshop attendees have either not yet started their farms or have been in business five years or less.

The networking, connections with other women and general openness and candidness of the presenters is a key component of Rural Women's Project programming.

“This is the best event I've attended of its kind in a long time. The interchange of ideas with other women has been invaluable. Thank you!”



MOSES Rural Women's Project

715-778-5775

| lisa@mosesorganic.org

| mosesorganic.org/rural-womens-project

Rural Women's Project Programs

In Her Boots:

Sustainable Agriculture For Women, By Women

mosesorganic.org/rural-womens-project/events

These day-long workshops take place on women-owned farms throughout the Midwest. Farm tours and topics vary by site and focus on issues of interest to female farmers such as ergonomics, business diversification, family integration/balance and the challenges of specific groups of women farmers (i.e., single women/women farming solo, seniors/retirees, etc.).

Women Caring for the Land

This project, in partnership with the Women, Food & Agriculture Network (WFAN), addresses the fact that nearly 50% of rural land is owned or co-owned by women, increasingly sole owners of senior and widowed women who inherited family farmland. These day-long workshops enable these landowners to meet with female conservation professionals regarding resources, engage in activities that teach conservation principles and tour area farmland to see these practices in action.

Network Support

mosesorganic.org/rural-womens-project/networking

The MOSES Rural Women's Project supports the development of locally-based, ongoing networks for women committed to sustainable agriculture to get together in person and develop strong community connections, collaborations and resource-sharing.

Soil Sisters:

A Celebration of Wisconsin Farms and Rural Life

soilsisterswi.org

The annual public event the first weekend in August showcases over twenty women-owned farms in South Central Wisconsin with farm tours, on-farm workshops and various culinary events. Held in partnership with the Wisconsin Farmers Union and Renewing the Countryside.

Media Outreach

mosesorganic.org/rural-womens-project/farm-stories

The Rural Women's Project shares the inspiring stories of women farmers who practice sustainable and organic agriculture with the media, including features in such outlets as Wisconsin Public Radio, NBC-15 Madison, Wisconsin Electric Cooperative News Magazine, Agri-View, Edible Madison, Civil Eats and Brava Magazine.

Women's Leadership in Food System Change

The MOSES Rural Women's Project works in various collaborative capacities to lead national efforts to support women working on food system change, provide education and training on policy issues and grassroots organizing. One such effort is the Plate to Politics initiative in partnership with the Women, Food & Agriculture Network focusing on women committed to healthy food systems.

MOSES Organic Farming Conference

mosesorganic.org/conference

The Rural Women's Project facilitates various special sessions for women annually at the MOSES Conference, including Ask an Expert roundtables, networking sessions and targeted workshops.

Useful Links

MOSES Rural Women's Project Facebook page

facebook.com/groups/MOSESRWP

Connect and share resources and ideas.

Women, Food & Agriculture Network

wfan.org

National women in sustainable agriculture network with a free e-newsletter and listserve

Program Coordinator

Lisa Kivirist: lisa@mosesorganic.org

Lisa Kivirist founded and coordinates the Rural Women's Project for MOSES. She is the author of *Soil Sisters: A Toolkit for Women Farmers*, *Homemade for Sale*, *Farmstead Chef*, *ECOpreneuring* and *Rural Renaissance*. Lisa is an Endowed Chair at the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture, and was named by In Business Magazine as a "Woman of Industry" for leadership growing the women in sustainable agriculture movement. She and her family run Inn Serendipity Farm and B&B in Wisconsin, completely powered by the wind and sun.



MOSES provides education, resources, and guidance to help farmers grow organic.

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