



United States Department of Agriculture



## Women in ag.

Each woman in agriculture has an incredible story to tell. I have listened to many of these stories during my travels across the country and around the world these past few months. Whether I am sitting on a tractor with two female Senators from the Midwest, or on a dairy farm with the Crete family in New Hampshire, or visiting a woman rose farmer in Guatemala, I'm always thinking about and sharing your

stories with others. This July issue of the Women in Agriculture newsletter includes several, as well as new core mentoring groups that will enable you to connect with your peers.

Many of you have shared your life experiences when you joined the Women in Agriculture Mentoring Network. "I'm a new farmer and need all the information, advice and guidance I can get," "We would like to network with other women in the industry," and "It would be great to join your network of women in Ag and hear about other women's challenges and successes," are just a few of the sentiments you have shared. Your comments are what drive the discussion and that is why we are ready to take the next step.

This month marks the start of the Women in Agriculture core mentoring groups - an opportunity for you to share your stories with each other, because the only way to grow as a group is to listen to one another. There are seven core groups to choose from: college students; young professionals; farmers/producers/ranchers; ag off the farm (agri-business/media/research); educators; government; and AGvocates. You are invited to opt into one or two groups that interest you. More details are available in this newsletter. We hope you will take advantage of this resource.

Your stories and experiences continue to fuel my passion for the Women in Agriculture mission: to empower, engage, and encourage women across all areas of agriculture. I have learned so much from all of you and I promise to continue to listen. Ultimately, we all have the responsibility, obligation and opportunity to make a difference for other women in our field.

**Krysta Harden**

Deputy Secretary of Agriculture

## Core Mentoring Groups Launch

Sign up for a core mentoring group! We have seven groups covering all kinds of women in ag, from students, to government employees, to farmers and producers. You are invited to opt into one or two groups that interest you, or you fit into.

**Follow this link** to opt into groups.

**We are also looking for group facilitators** - if you are interested in facilitating one of the groups you opted into, please let us know in the form. And, as always, we want to hear your stories and advice! Included on the form is text box where you can tell us about yourself, your operation, or what you'd like to see from us.

## Women in Agriculture Roundtables

### Minnesota and North Dakota

At the end of May, Deputy Secretary Harden traveled to the Midwest to participate in two Women in Agriculture roundtables. Senator Amy Klobuchar at the University of Minnesota, and Senators Heitkamp and Klobuchar at the North Dakota State College of Science, hosted packed rooms full of women from a variety of agricultural backgrounds. The panelists at both events discussed how they first got engaged in agriculture, the barriers they have faced in their careers, as well as the importance of mentoring and networking. And there's always time for a quick photo opportunity in a tractor!

### Maine and New Hampshire

The Deputy Secretary continued her domestic travels in



Agriculture Deputy Secretary Krysta Harden, Senator Amy Klobuchar (MN) and Duncanson Growers' Owner Kristin Weeks Duncanson at the Women in Agriculture Summit held at the University of Minnesota on May 27.

June and visited Congresswomen Chellie Pingree in Southern Maine, and Congresswomen Annie Kuster in New Hampshire. It was a bit chilly in the Northeast, but Deputy Harden was able to tour women-owned and run farm operations, spoke with local women leaders in the agriculture sector, and participated

**The discussion is Maine, where 30% of the state's farmers are women.**

in panel discussions. Both panels were well attended with diverse participation both on the panels and in the audience. The discussion is Maine, where 30% of the state's farmers are women, centered on how the state, congress and USDA could better support women and small operations by providing additional funding for critical programs. In New Hampshire, a state with an all women congressional delegation and the second highest number of women farmers in the nation, the panel touched on the role women play in Agricultural communities, leading and growing business. We expect lots of new sign-up's to the USDA women in agriculture network following these events!

## The Deputy Secretary Travels to Honduras and Guatemala

Across the world, women are running successful farming operations, as well as facing challenges in agriculture and nutrition. Over the past two months USDA staff and the Deputy Secretary have had the opportunity to visit three countries to connect with Ag ministers, women farmers, and visit agricultural operations that are supporting local communities.

In Guatemala, the Deputy and her team visited a training center for indigenous women to learn trades and take classes on marketing, finance and nutrition. The Deputy also visited a rose

production facility that employs local women, many of whom were widowed or young single mothers. The facility had received startup funds from USDA and has now expanded and is looking to export. We wrapped up the trip with a meeting with the Education Minister to discuss efforts to keep girls in school.

In Honduras, the Deputy Secretary visited two schools that received assistance from USDA. The first school was using USA corn/soy blend, vegetable oil and rice in school meal preparation. They also utilized fresh produce from a large on school

garden that the students worked in. The parents from the community came to the school to cook and also learn about nutrition. The second school was receiving assistance for a transportation program to reduce the dropout rate for children who had to walk four miles to school each day.

Finally, in Rome, at the Food and Agriculture Organization annual conference, the Deputy Secretary held a series of meetings with Ag Ministers and Deputy Ag Ministers from around the world to discuss issues around land tenure, land ownership and access to capital for women.



Guatemala Foreign Agricultural Service staff visits with Deputy Secretary Harden.

## Women in Agriculture Spotlight

USDA photo by David Kosling.



If you have visited one of NYC's Greenmarkets, chances are you've met **Rose Hubbert** of Back to the Future Farm. Rose runs a dairy operation with her husband and son just north of New York City. New to farming, Rose relied heavily on beginning farmer and business training. She now successfully sells milk and eggs through wholesale deliveries and at six farmers markets in New York City. We talked to Rose about what it was like to start a career in farming, the challenges of urban agriculture, and what led to her and her family's success.

### When you were little, what did you want to be when you grew up?

Like every child it always changed like the wind. If you had mentioned farming to me I would have said you are crazy. I think that's because I was never exposed to it as a child. I grew up right outside of NYC. There were no dairy farms. I did many jobs to support myself and my family. I never knew what I wanted to be when I grew up until I found farming at the age of 50! Now I can honestly say I want to be a farmer when I grow up. I consider myself very blessed to have found what I really want to do.

### What is your favorite part of working in agriculture?

As hard as working in agriculture is, and trust me when I tell Continued on next page





Agriculture Deputy Secretary Krysta Harden visits vendors at the Public Market in Rochester, NY on Saturday, Jun. 16, 2015.

you it is the hardest job I have ever done, my most favorite part is watching my husband and 11 year old son Joshua working together and building such a wonderful bond. The bond that the 3 of us have created together and with our cows, heifers and calves, chickens, swans and ducks is one of the most rewarding feelings there is in the world.

### **What is the biggest challenge that faces your operation today?**

For me being a small producer who does everything from animal care, to farm chores, preparing all products to be sold, there is just not enough time in a day. I am also a mother and a wife. To find balance I find is

impossible. Some days I sit and wonder “why am I doing this?” Then someone reminds me that my product is amazing and that makes it all worth it.

At NYC farmers markets, I have been able to showcase my products to a much wider audience. We have been blessed to meet so many others from many walks of life and educate many individuals on farming and agriculture here in our country. Our community now has more of the “know your farmer, know your food” attitude.

### **What advice would you share with other women looking to get into agriculture?**

I hope to be able to inspire young women and men that

have an interest in this industry. Our local Cornell Extension Office has a young farmers program. I have spoken to that group of young and aspiring dairy farmers and have tried to give them the best advice I can on how to farm small and find a niche market. We allow other dairy farmers to come into our processing plant to see if this is the route they want to go and provide them with a better understanding of all that is involved in the dairy processing business. I believe if we can help one person make that decision, I call that success.

## What's Ahead

# Upcoming Women in Ag Events with Deputy Secretary Harden

**August 18, 1:15pm:** Women in Ag Roundtable with Senator Stabenow in East Lansing, Michigan

Do you have events you'd like to be featured in our next newsletter? Please send them to us at [agwomenlead@usda.gov](mailto:agwomenlead@usda.gov).

**Wednesday, July 29 at 3:15 p.m. EDT:**

Engagement call to discuss next steps for the Women in Agriculture Mentoring Network

\*If there are questions you would like to submit in advance, please send them to [agwomenlead@usda.gov](mailto:agwomenlead@usda.gov) with "Engagement Call" in the subject line.

**Call-in:** 888-844-9904

**Passcode:** 9041474#

**Tuesday, August 18 at 1:15 p.m. EDT:**

Women in Agriculture roundtable with Senator Stabenow in East Lansing, Michigan

**Thursday, August 20 at TBD: #womeninag twitter townhall** (Stay tuned for more details)

## County Office Elections

Are you a beginning or small-scale farmer? Are you producing for organic or local markets? Do you work for an organization that represents any of these producer types? Nominations are now open through August 3rd for your local County Farm Service Agency (FSA) Committees. Nationwide, there are approximately 7,800 farmers and ranchers serving on FSA county committees, and your participation is a great way to get connected to the agricultural community and help make important decisions. The nomination form and other information about FSA county committee elections are available on the [FSA elections website](#) or visit your [local FSA Office](#) today!

## Mission/Vision

### Women in Agriculture Mentoring Network

This Network is designed to support and engage women across all areas of agriculture and to help foster professional partnerships between women with shared backgrounds, interests, and professional goals.

**The Mission of the Women in Ag Mentoring Network is to:**

**EMPOWER ENGAGE ENCOURAGE**

**Here's what YOU can do:**

- Join a Networking or Mentoring Group
- Participate in the "Networking Event Challenge"

### Tell us your story

**Here's what YOU can expect:**

- Quarterly Engagement Calls
- Newsletter Updates
- Networking Group Dialogues
- Networking Event Challenges

## In the News

An opinion letter in the Fargo Forum from the Deputy Secretary and Senator Heitkamp on the importance of women for the future of agriculture - [A Letter: Daughters, granddaughters the future of US agriculture.](#)

U.S. Department of Agriculture Deputy Secretary Krysta Harden discusses the challenges confronting women farmers and the importance of supporting women's involvement in all stages of the food value chain [in this video.](#)

[Freeport forum examines farming from a female perspective](#), a recap of the Deputy Secretary's visit to Maine.

[A video by the Maine local news station, WCSH6](#), about the Deputy's visit to Skowhegan in June.

[In Conversation with #womeninag: Casey Cox](#)—The latest women in agriculture profile.

Former Crop Insurance Company employee and Iowan, Marji Guylor-Alaniz, photographs women farmers to document their integral roles on the farm. Her blog, [Farmher](#), and photos were [highlighted recently in Oprah Magazine.](#)

Arkansas Woman Graduates from Youth Loan to Become FSA's 13,000th Microloan Recipient <http://blogs.usda.gov/2015/06/29/arkansas-woman-graduates-from-youth-loan-to-become-fsas-13000th-microloan-recipient/>