

# Women find career opportunities in agriculture

By Carol Harrah

Agricultural careers are predominately male-oriented, said three women Wednesday who were participating in a panel discussion about women in agricultural careers.

Barbara Busch, a 1980 agricultural graduate from UNL, said that having a background in ranching made it easier to get her job as a soil conservationist with the Soil Conservation Service in Mullen, Neb.

"I go out and talk to ranchers about soil conservation and how many cattle they can have on their land," she said. "Since I grew up on a ranch, I can start a conversation easily with the ranchers and they are more responsive to me."

Busch said she works mainly with men, and her rural background helps her to be more at ease in her job than men from urban backgrounds might be.

"I work in a male-dominated job. I get used to seeing very few women. There are a lot of men with urban backgrounds that don't understand the ranchers," Busch said.

"They aren't accustomed to seeing a can of chew in the back pocket, the boots or the leather belts with names engraved on

them. I am familiar with this and what type of work the ranchers are involved in."

### Male-dominated field

Pat Waldren, sales representative for the CIBA-GEIGY (Monsanto) Corp., said she also works in a male-dominated field. She has been working there for three years and said the toughest part of her job was becoming accustomed to the way men interact with her.

"Men usually shake hands with each other when they are being introduced to each other," she said, "and that is different for me. I was brought up to keep my hands to myself, the normal things girls are taught."

She added that it was awkward the way farmers would pay attention to what she was saying in a one-to-one situation.

"They would lean their shoulder against mine and I had problems with this at first," she said. "I then realized that this way their way of showing that they were paying attention to you. It was hard to adjust to the ways men physically interact with each other."

Shelly Burcham, a loan officer for the Federal Reserve Land Bank in Red Oak, Iowa, and a 1981 UNL agriculture graduate

said she was the first woman loan officer there, which has been a big adjustment for a lot of people.

"I get women calling up about their husbands' loans and they want to speak to a loan officer, she said. "After some arguing with some people, I finally have to say 'But I am one of the boys,' before they understand that I'm not a secretary."

The women talked about having careers and families.

Waldren had her children before she began her career.

"A woman should never get a new job and begin a family at the same time," Waldren said. "That would be too hard on a person to do both at the same time."

Burcham said that in her job, she feels it is impossible to be tied down with a family at the moment.

"My job isn't a 40-hour-per-week job," Burcham said. "I work nights and sometimes on the weekend, and if I had a family I would never get to see them."

### Advancement opportunities

All three panelists said they had good opportunities for advancement in their jobs, but some had trouble dealing with old-fashioned values.

Busch said her parents taught her the

traditional roles of the man working and the woman staying at home with the children.

"My parents put forth the idea that the man works and the woman is always barefoot and pregnant," Busch said. "I don't hold anything against them because that is how they were brought up."

"Since I work for the federal government, I have terrific opportunities for advancement. It doesn't matter if you're a woman or a man. My dilemma is not if I can advance and move up in my job," she said, "but more on the line of should I move upwards in my job."

Burcham said, "You think that you get a lot of pressure in college and know how to handle pressure. But I deal with a different sort of pressure than I have two tests tomorrow. Will I make it? I decided if people will or won't get loans, and that is a big responsibility and pressure," Burcham said.

Waldren said mobility is very important in landing a job.

"If you can't move into a different part of Nebraska or another state, you'll have a hard time landing a job," Waldren said. "Mobility is very important in starting out with a company."

## Fellowships for minorities to be awarded

The National Research Council plans to award approximately 34 Postdoctoral Fellowships for Minorities in a program designed to provide opportunities for continued education and experience in research to American Indians and Alaskan Natives (Eskimo or Aleut), Black Americans, Mexican Americans/Chicanos and Puerto Ricans.

Fellowship recipients will be selected from scientists, engineers and scholars in the humanities who "show greatest promise of future achievement in academic research and scholarship in higher education."

In this national competition, sponsored by the Ford Foundation, citizens of the United States who are members of one of the designated minority groups, who are engaged in college or university teaching and who hold doctoral degrees may apply for a fellowship award of one year's duration.

Awards will be made in the areas of behavioral and social sciences, humanities, EMP fields (engineering sciences, mathematics, physical sciences), life sciences and for interdisciplinary programs of study.

Tenure of fellowship provides postdoctoral research experience at an appropriate nonprofit institution of the Fellow's choice, such as a research university, government laboratory, national laboratory, privately-sponsored nonprofit institute or a center for advanced study.

Further information and application materials may be obtained from the Fellowship Office, National Research Council, 2101 Constitution Avenue, Washington, D.C. 20418.

## Correction

A story in Wednesday's Daily Nebraskan incorrectly reported that two security guards watch outside the ward doors at the psychiatric unit of Lincoln General Hospital.

There are no security guards in the ward.

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