

Women in Agriculture

Abstract

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Research indicates that educated women are more productive and the return on investment is high. For improved conditions in both economy and civil society levels of education for women must be raised, yet in most developing countries women remain less educated than men.

Recent events in Afghanistan have given a clear picture of inequities in education for women. It is vital that we strive to improve opportunities for education so that women can play a role in all aspects of their communities activities. This includes business ownership, government leadership and decision making positions in all levels of community.

I am here to work with my peers to identify ways to deliver education including both classroom and extension (informal) learning for lifelong needs. To do this we must develop new innovative delivery methods. We must also recognize the many ancillary benefits that providing education can bring. This includes health and nutrition provided for girls where school lunches is paired with education. Acting on former Senator McGovern's initiative the Congress has taken initial steps to provide such programs. Availability of health care and other services through school centers are also key to progress.

USDA and its partners have for many years sought to reach rural women, and provide them with educational tools. The Agency I proudly lead, the Cooperative State, Research, Education, and Extension Service, has been actively involved in identifying needs and then developing programs to fulfill them.

I call upon all of us involved in this conference to commit our efforts to improve the prospects for rural women and to recognize that education must play an important role in achieving what we all seek ,the improvement of our world.