

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
FRANCES PERKINS, Secretary  
WOMEN'S BUREAU  
MARY ANDERSON, Director



SUCCESSFUL PRACTICES IN THE  
EMPLOYMENT OF NONFARM WOMEN  
ON FARMS IN THE NORTHEASTERN  
STATES, 1943

By  
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## LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR,  
WOMEN'S BUREAU,  
*Washington, January 31, 1944.*

MADAM: I am submitting herewith a description of the work on farms done by nonfarm women, and the conditions under which such work was done, in the Northeastern States in 1943. As in industry, the employment of a new group of workers by employers not accustomed to this type of worker creates many problems calling for practical adjustment. This report points out the most successful practices and the steps necessary to secure a better utilization of nonfarm women on farms in the Northeastern States in 1944.

The field surveys were made and the report has been written by Frances W. Valentine.

Respectfully submitted.

MARY ANDERSON, *Director.*

HON. FRANCES PERKINS,  
*Secretary of Labor.*

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GIRLS PICKING TOMATOES ON A MARKET-GARDEN FARM.

# Successful Practices in the Employment of Nonfarm Women on Farms in the Northeastern States, 1943

## INTRODUCTION

### THE AGRICULTURE OF THE NORTHEASTERN REGION

The necessity of using women to help to supply the great demand for agricultural workers became generally recognized in the Northeastern States<sup>1</sup> during the 1943 season. That there were women and girls ready to take farm jobs in 1943 and that many projects for women farm workers were set up and even operating was due largely to the unswerving efforts of pioneer women leaders and to the more farsighted farmers. These men and women, with or without State recognition and aid and before the Extension Service of the Department of Agriculture was charged by Congress with the responsibility of recruiting women for farm work, paved the way and broke down farmers' resistance to the employment of women in 1942. By the spring of 1943 there were increasing numbers of women and girls ready to serve and increasing numbers of farmers ready to try them. By the end of the 1943 season there was no question of the value of the women's work, no question of agriculture's need for them, little question of the farmers' willingness to employ them.

The farms of this Northeastern Region have furnished the fluid milk for the great eastern centers of population, the value of their milk and cream sales (exclusive of cream sold as butterfat), both wholesale and retail, exceeding that of any other division of the United States. In 1941 almost one-third (32 percent) of the potato crop of the country was produced here. The value of the truck crops grown here for market and for processing was over 76½ million dollars, more than a fifth of the total valuation for the whole country. Particularly now that long-distance transportation is curtailed, these are the farms that supply the tables of the homes of this region. In the production of apples, in farm value the second most important fruit of the country, it ranks second and produces nearly one-third of all the commercial crop. Only the Western States (and these now ship east fewer apples than formerly) exceed this region. The Northeastern States produce 17 percent of the eggs, 13 percent of the chickens, of the United States.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this study, "Northeastern States" conforms closely to the Eastern Division used by the Extension Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. It includes Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland, excluding only West Virginia of the Extension Service group.

<sup>2</sup> From "Agricultural Statistics, 1942," U. S. Department of Agriculture.

While this region is not rated as one of the great agricultural sections of the United States, it is a region which consumes most of what it produces, and any lowering of this production would immediately affect the food supply of the people of this part of the country.

Because it is predominantly an industrial section, the increase in industrial labor demands has been so tremendous that farm labor has been depleted. The Department of Agriculture's map showing the districts where need for an emergency farm-labor program exists shows almost this entire area marked to indicate "large or very large and serious seasonal or year-round labor problem."

The purpose of this bulletin is to sum up and evaluate the 1943 experience in the use of women on the farms in the Northeastern States and to point out some of the important factors to be considered when employing them in the future.

### THE LABOR DEMAND AND THE FARMS ON WHICH WOMEN WORKED

In this region owner-operated farms prevail, farms of moderate size, where most of the family assist in the farm operations, one way or another. Depending on the size of the farm, farmers had been in the habit of employing, the year round, such farm hands as were needed to take care of the continuous work, especially on dairy and poultry farms where certain work goes on regardless of season. When spring came, on dairy or general farms one or more extra men, as the case demanded, would be employed for the season. During the haying period again one or more extra hands might be hired by the day or until haying was done.

On the truck or vegetable-growing farms, spring work begins early. The market gardener begins to expand his force as soon as the ground can be worked. According to the crop he grows he needs, besides a continuous force to take care of the growing crops, extra hands to harvest the crops in which he specializes. There are throughout this region a great many truck farms. These are situated near the large cities in great numbers, so that their produce can be taken to market every day. Many of the truck farmers rent land for their crops, usually near their own farms. These farms may employ from a dozen to a hundred workers at a time.

Orchard crops are grown sometimes in connection with truck or dairy farms but principally as major crops. There are many apple and peach orchards—peaches chiefly in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York, apples in every State but chiefly in New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Massachusetts, and Maryland. Pears are a considerable crop in New York and Pennsylvania, and more grapes are grown in New York than in any other State save California. The chief need for extra workers in the orchards is during harvest time.

Commercial canneries are established in these States in the regions where various vegetables, such as corn, beans, and tomatoes, can be grown most easily. Some canneries own large acreages and grow vegetables for their own factories, others contract with farmers to grow vegetables for them.

All these varied types of farms needed help in 1943. Not only were the extra male hands that they had been in the habit of picking up easily when needed no longer available, but the regular year-round hands were largely gone or going to war industries or to the armed services. The realization of that fact on the part of the farmers opened the way for the employment of women. The demand for women, scarcely more than a reluctant toleration at first, began to appear. At the end of the season women had been successfully used on the following types of farms.

1. *Truck or Market-Garden Farms.*—By far the greatest number of women and girls had been employed by farmers growing vegetables and small fruits. From northern Maine to Maryland; from western New York to the end of Long Island, the market gardeners used women from May to November and were surprised and pleased with the women workers, most of whom had never been on a farm before. If there was one outstanding characteristic mentioned over and over again by farmers, it was the "intelligence" of the women workers. "You only have to explain a thing to them once and they understand and do it the way you say," was a frequent comment. As the harvest season for one crop after another came along, from early summer to late autumn, many extra women were needed in addition to those who had worked all through the planting and growing season.

2. *Small-Fruit Growers and Orchardists.*—Women had been employed to harvest all sorts of berries and small fruits and wound up the season in the peach and apple orchards, where they were considered more careful and better pickers than ordinary help.

3. *Dairy Farms.*—These farms had employed women all summer, when they could get them, and considered their gentle, quiet handling of cows particularly good and their cleanliness in the dairies outstanding. They would have been glad to keep them on the year round.

4. *Poultry Farms.*—Minute attention to detail is essential on poultry farms, where women were found to be satisfactory workers.

5. *Seed-Growing Farms.*—A large commercial seed grower had used to his entire satisfaction a group of 25 to 30 junior girls to weed, cultivate, and finally harvest the vegetable-seed crops.

## THE RECORD FOR 1943

### PLANS TO MEET THE 1943 NEEDS

#### Experiments of 1942.

The first use of nonfarm women in this region was made in 1942. In that year there had been an attempt in several States in this section to recruit nonfarm women for farm work and to persuade farmers to at least give them a trial. Opposition to the use of women was found not only among farmers but among agricultural leaders and farmers' organizations. Some State farm-labor supervisors or county agents, if not actively opposing the movement to use women, did not believe it would work or thought the difficulties attendant on any definite move to use women were too great. In two States, however, Maine and Connecticut, State organizations with State funds (very limited) had been set up. The Women's Emergency Farm Service in Maine under Katharine Potter and the Connecticut Land Army under Mrs. Joseph Alsop had recruited girls and women and placed them on farms, where they had been entirely satisfactory. Two private agencies also were active; the Vermont Land Corps under the leadership of Dorothy Thompson had placed about 50 girls and women on farms, and the "Farm for Freedom" group in New York State under Mrs. Frank Washburn had established a group of college girls at Clermont, N. Y., to work on nearby farms. In all these projects the work of the women and girls had both surprised and pleased the farmers, so that in 1943 they were asking for women in many places.

In addition to these efforts there had been in 1942 women placement officers in the New York and New Jersey U. S. Employment Service who were trying to place women on farms. There was not always sufficiently well organized supervision of placements to secure the standards necessary to success.

#### Private-Agency Plans of 1943.

In 1943, in addition to the State plans of Maine and Connecticut, other private organizations were eager to "do something," and during the winter months of 1942-43 much preliminary work was done by individuals and agencies who believed women could and should be used to help in the farm-labor shortage. Both to individual farmers and to farm commodity groups the possibility of trying women was proposed. Plans were outlined by which they might be employed, efforts were made to set up something that seemed practical to the farmer, and he was told of the satisfaction expressed by the farmers who had tried women.

The result was that by the spring of 1943 a considerable number of privately organized groups of women for farm work were being set up, as well as a continuation of the two State-sponsored plans, and a fairly large group of farmers were looking for women to help with

their work. With work assured, these projects sought recruits largely through colleges, junior colleges, and schools, since large numbers of students and teachers who were known to have time available could be reached easily through such channels. Placement officers at these institutions were deluged with requests for girls to work on farms. Some individual farmers sought recruits for groups to work on their farms. No one could have offered finer or more successful cooperation than the college and school vocational and placement officers in all this work. As there was no one channel through which workers cleared, it resulted in some women who desired work failing to get it, and some projects not having all the workers they desired.

### **Government-Agency Plans of 1943.**

At the end of April Congress appropriated funds and named the Extension Service of the Department of Agriculture as the agency to handle farm labor under the War Food Administration. Within this set-up a Women's Land Army program was to be developed, which was to cooperate with all agencies that could help to recruit women who could work on farms, place the workers, and otherwise supervise this phase of farm labor. Miss Florence L. Hall was named national leader of the Women's Land Army, and Women's Land Army leaders were appointed by the Extension Service in nearly every State. These women worked under the State Farm Labor Supervisor (an Extension Service man in each case) helping with whatever method of utilizing women seemed best in that State.

In most States, plans for using women got under way at once. State leaders generally recognized that it was impossible to provide a sufficient number of women workers from localities adjacent to farms, who would live at home and go to and from work on nearby farms each day. Recruits were sought in large urban areas for units of workers to be set up in localities where suitable housing could be provided and farmers found who were ready to employ women.

### **The Recruiting of Women.**

Recruiting plans were put into effect during June and July. For New York State a contract was made between the Extension Service and the USES by which the latter was to recruit and help to place farm labor. A woman was put in charge of the women's work, with a woman assistant. Press, radio, posters were used to attract women. Descriptive circulars of the different projects and camps were distributed, and women were interviewed and sent out to whichever of a dozen projects might need workers. Women were recruited also for year-round jobs, and for the Farmingdale farm-training school on Long Island.

Other States put out their own publicity through the Extension Service Publicity Department, and recruited for their needs through whatever channels it could devise—press, radio, posters, leaflets, clubs, organizations, industries, YWCA, AWVS, USO, Civilian Defense, lists of rejects of WACs or WAVEs, personal contacts, and so forth. (Schools and colleges were in most cases closed and their vacation workers already enrolled before July.) In this region there were only three States—Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Delaware—where no work camps for women workers were set up by the Extension Service.

### **The Interviewing of Women.**

Wherever possible, workers were interviewed before being accepted by someone trained for the job, but there was in general very little screening of applicants. Every effort was made to take the glamor out of the job and to present it as work rather than as a vacation. Where recruits applied by mail, interviews were not always possible, which sometimes led to later difficulties. Considering this, there were on the whole a surprisingly small proportion who were complete misfits. On some projects where workers came from a distance without interviews, character references were required, but that was rare.

### **The Groups of Women Furnishing Recruits.**

#### **The Women of Farm Families.**

It should be remembered that the women members of farm families always have been and always will be the most important women farm workers. In 1943 they took over not only a tremendous amount of work but often entire managerial responsibility. But it was still impossible for them to carry the entire extra burden of work, and resort had to be made to the help of women who had never before worked on farms. It is the work of these inexperienced "nonfarm" women which this bulletin discusses.

#### **The Nonfarm Women Workers.**

As the need for women farm workers made itself known, many nonfarm women and girls came forward to answer the call. They came from many different sources and may be roughly divided into the following groups:

1. Students from women's colleges, junior colleges, and high or preparatory schools, and teachers.
2. Business and professional women other than teachers, including State or Federal employees.
3. Homemakers and unemployed women.
4. Women workers from industries.

The largest contribution probably was made by the student and teacher group. These girls and women, having a long summer vacation during which the majority of them do not plan continuous employment in ordinary times, offered a splendid group from which to draw. Their interest in and enthusiasm for the opportunity to contribute real service in food conservation, a field that attracted them, made them admirable recruits. Their physical condition generally was excellent. They were intelligent and conscientious. The great majority of them were not obliged to count on their summer's earnings for support. These women and girls could and usually did give a fairly long period of service, from one to four months.

The women in professional (other than teaching) and business life who gave up their vacations to work on farms, or who sometimes came to farming after giving up one job and before taking another, were a very important group. Among them were office workers from government and private offices, women from publishing houses and magazine agencies, telephone companies; writers, artists, librarians, lawyers, doctors, scientists, waitresses, manicurists, women from an endless variety of jobs; some were expatriates who had come to this country for refuge. Having been employed, all these women were likely to understand that concentrating on one's job is the primary asset of a good worker. Many of them jumped into their work and

did an unexpected amount for the time they were employed. While a period of one or two weeks (the prevailing period for this group) is a short time for a worker either to get into her stride or to be valuable enough to a farmer to earn what might be considered good wages, they did a great deal of work and the farmers were well pleased with the help they gave. Many gave a month, some even more.

In the Northeastern States the war industries were making such increasing demands for women workers that comparatively few women went to farms from industry. When industrial workers had vacations, they unquestionably had many demands on their time. They were not a large factor in the women farm labor in these States, but as more women are laid off in the shifting of war contracts this group may well become more important.

Many women who were not employed—women running their own homes with some free time, women who were employed but were willing to work Sundays, students who during the school term could work occasional days—thousands of these women went out from their own places of abode to work by the day on farms within reach. This work was principally harvesting crops where an emergency need existed for a short time. Unquestionably many crops were saved by this group. Since they had to be recruited from urban centers or college towns where there was a supply of women available, they could only be used on farms near enough to such centers to make transportation feasible. Typical of such services was the work of the American Women's Voluntary Services at Washington, D. C., which sent nearly 700 women during 1943 for "day-haul" work on nearby Maryland farms. The AWVS did all the interviewing of recruits, contacted the farms, arranged transportation, keeping an active program moving all summer. Another example, in one of the western counties of Massachusetts, where the strawberry, asparagus, onion, and potato fields as well as apple orchards all needed harvest hands at a time when colleges and schools were in session, the Women's Land Army leader and the county farm labor supervisors recruited hundreds of girl students for day or part-day work in the spring and fall.

This type of help did not, however, reach farms outside of this fortunate circle and many farmers had to have their help brought within reach of the farms.

## FARM WORK AND WORKING CONDITIONS OF 1943

### WORK DONE BY WOMEN

#### Market-Garden or Truck Farms.

Many large farms of this type are located near or within daily trucking distance of large centers of population, and all employ large numbers of workers from the spring planting season to the fall harvest. Some specialize in one, two, or three crops; others grow almost all vegetables; some grow berries and bush fruits; some even have orchards and dairies in addition to their vegetables. On these farms women either worked the whole season or harvested special crops.

The number of women who worked the whole season, or even three or four months of it, was comparatively small, but these women had the satisfaction of seeing the whole cycle from planting to harvesting.

(It must be remembered that up to the end of April there was no organized movement and no Government agency that was urging the use of women on farms.) Women cut seed potatoes. They weeded and thinned on hands and knees tiny seedlings as they came up. Much weeding was done by children, whom the women often supervised. Women pulled the small cabbage, cauliflower, and broccoli plants for transplanting. They planted beans and corn by hand. They did hoeing as the seedlings got bigger. They did cultivating and weeding between rows of spinach and lettuce and other vegetables with scuffle hoe and "shove hoe." They dusted plants with insecticides and fungicides. They helped transplant tomatoes and celery. They pulled and bunched radishes. They nailed vegetable boxes (on rainy days). They cut and bunched asparagus and cut rhubarb.

As strawberries began to ripen, many pickers were needed. Some camps were organized just for the few weeks of berry picking and such work was the only job for these women. Other regions depended on women workers by the day from nearby towns. Berry picking requires quickness and dexterity and most inexperienced workers could not do so much as old timers. Currants, raspberries, blueberries, cranberries—these crops drew workers from such camps as were established and also from nearby towns.

Meantime, early vegetable crops were ripening. Women picked lettuce, spinach, summer squash (a prickly job); they picked, trimmed, and bunched beets and carrots; they picked sweet corn, considered by some farmers as both a heavy job and one that needs experience and judgment in selecting ears of just the right degree of ripeness.

Probably no one job employed more women than picking snap or string beans. Some farms grew nothing but string beans. This meant days lost if it was rainy, for beans cannot be picked when the vines are wet. Though it was monotonous, women did very well at it, one farmer saying, "After I showed them the size of the beans that should be picked and should be left, and how to pull them off without hurting the vines, I did not have to instruct them again nor correct them. They have done an excellent job, far better than the boys have ever done."

Another crop that employed many women was tomatoes. Women did the pruning and tying up of the vines to overhead wires so that only one or two main stems were left to bear fruit. The side shoots or suckers had to be repeatedly broken or cut off—a job that made hands, arms, and legs literally black from green-tomato-vine juice. Later the women picked tomatoes day after day, in what they sometimes called "the jungle," vines were so dense. One of the employers said women were "most useful on work that is not too heavy, but which requires skill and painstaking ability, such as trimming and training trellis tomatoes."

Some women worked all the time in the packing sheds, where the vegetables were stripped, bunched, washed, sorted, and packed. They were regarded as good at this work though there was some comment on a tendency of younger girls to chatter and sing too much where they were working close together. One man had installed a radio to have conversation and music for the workers rather than by them.

As the season advanced into fall women harvested carrots and turnips, picked up onions and potatoes. Farmers who had not em-

ployed women earlier in the season now sought their help even from some distance to harvest their crops.

The method generally used in picking vegetables was to pick into a bushel or  $\frac{5}{8}$ -bushel basket and carry it to the end of the row, where a truck picked it up. These baskets were sometimes too heavy for women to carry, weighing from 30 to 50 pounds; sometimes older boys or men carried and loaded them when full. One group of women workers developed a system of carrying the containers on their heads.

There is a considerable opportunity for reengineering many farm jobs so that they can be done an easier way if women are to be used. In fact, one of the employers said, "Some of the girls at times had good suggestions on easier and more efficient ways of doing certain jobs." This rearrangement of work to suit the physical capacity of women has already had official attention in the WAC and is usual in industries employing women for the first time.

Where women were picking into bushel baskets, the suggestion was made to use  $\frac{1}{2}$ -bushel baskets or fill the bushel baskets only one-half full. Another suggestion made by workers was that in picking down a row of summer squash, one girl pick from the vines to right and to left, and another girl come behind with the basket, so that constant setting down and picking up the basket was avoided, and by alternating "picking" and "lugging" the work was less fatiguing. Another improvement was picking from the middle toward the end of the row.

On some of these truck farms girls drove tractors and farm trucks, the latter chiefly on errands or to make deliveries of small loads. Where stock was kept, the women helped with the haying, and operated the hay hoists that unloaded the hay in the lofts, where they did some spreading and treading. They raked with horse rakes, drove trucks loaded with hay, and on one truck and dairy farm two girls and two men made up the team that operated the hay baler as long as there was any hay to cut in the neighborhood.

Few of the market gardeners, however, had such diverting jobs. Most of the work was repetitive and monotonous, and the fact that practically everyone stuck it out shows the seriousness of their purpose. Where farmers can arrange some variety in the work, it will unquestionably add to the morale. The same job all day and every day for weeks becomes very tedious and a change to something else if only for an hour or two during the day brings new energy and interest to the workers.

The general attitude of the farmers was one of great satisfaction and surprise that women did so well. Compared to boys of 18 to 20 years they "were more conscientious, made better use of their time, required less supervision, and the quality of their work was better than that of boys." Many farmers said they could not have handled their work without the "girls" and all wanted them back next year. In fact, many said that their planting and production plans were dependent on being able to have their women workers back.

### **Orchards.**

*Apples.*—In 1943, women really came into the picture in the apple orchards of the Northeast. Harvesting was a great problem and a general call went out for helpers.

Women were sought by newspaper publicity, by Extension Service labor supervisors and Land Army leaders, by the U. S. Employment

Service, and by growers themselves. Many responded. They came out from nearby cities for the day by train, automobile, and farmer's truck. They went from colleges for days and half-days. (Gas was always granted for this work.) In a few instances camps were set



GIRL APPLE-PICKER ON A FRUIT FARM.

up to house women; in some cases they lived on the farms; one way or another they actually did a great deal of the harvesting.

The orchardists usually gave them some instruction before starting, explained how to grasp the apple with the blossom end in the palm of the hand, and with the forefinger or thumb against the stem break it off, rather than drag the apple from the tree. The pickers were told

that apples must be handled as carefully as eggs, never dropped in baskets or boxes; that baskets must never be dumped into boxes; that apples which dropped from the trees or were knocked off must not be put in with the hand-picked fruit; and so forth.

The prevailing report was that women learned quickly, were intelligent and conscientious, did not break so many fruit spurs as ordinary inexperienced pickers, were more careful in handling fruit and did not bruise many apples. In general, nonfarm women (and men also) did not pick so many bushels a day as regular experienced pickers, but the foreman of one large orchard said, turning to a young married woman who was just walking in from the orchard, "This is our best picker. She can pick right alongside of me, pick just as fast and just as carefully as I can." She had never picked before.

Picking is fairly hard work. Usually  $\frac{1}{2}$ -bushel or  $\frac{5}{8}$ -bushel baskets or containers are used, and when full they weigh around 25 pounds. Of course, smaller baskets can be used, as they are all emptied into orchard boxes holding about a bushel.

There seemed to be considerable apprehension among growers that women would not be able to climb ladders and could not move nor put up ladders. This certainly was not true of the younger women nor of many of the older ones. They climbed ladders without hesitating; many of the girls climbed like monkeys to the very top. In most cases men moved and set up the ladders, in some the girls scorned any such aid, two girls easily carrying a ladder together and setting it up, after they learned how. Orchard ladders are of various types and lengths. Some start like ordinary ladders and taper off to a point at the top to be more easily poked up into the branches (these ladders may be 14, 16, 18, or 20 feet long); some have three legs, the front like an ordinary stepladder, the back only one leg, like a three-legged easel, so that it can more easily be pushed in among the branches; besides these, the ordinary stepladder and straight ladder sometimes are used. Women should have instruction on how to set up ladders so that they will be secure; as should inexperienced boys and men, for that matter, since they can be just as ignorant about such practices as women.

Previous to harvest time, girls and women had been employed to thin apples, that is, to pick off little apples that either showed some blemish or were crowded too close to other apples. Such thinning insures better fruit, a more valuable crop, but can be practiced only where there is a sufficient labor supply.

Some growers believe, others do not, that women can assist in the spraying. It was rarely done last year. This is a two-man job, one to drive the tractor or spray truck, one to direct the spray nozzle. If an orchard is on level ground, the driving is not difficult. If on steep hills, it is a hard job even for an experienced man. Directing the spray or dusting hose is a heavy, dirty job, but no more so than many factory jobs women are doing. Nevertheless, it probably will be one of the last orchard jobs women will do.

The loading of boxes of picked fruit onto trucks to be carried to the storehouse is a heavy job, boxes weighing about 44 pounds. Girls and women are advised against doing such work continuously, unless two do it together. Much loading was done in 1943, however, by strong active girls in their late teens and twenties.

Nailing boxes is a good job for rainy days during the summer. Many growers buy their boxes knocked down, and put them together on the farm. It is light work, requiring rhythmic, well coordinated movements, and many girls did well at it.

After the crop is picked, the sorting, grading, and packing go on for a large part of the late fall and early winter, since the apples, which are put into storage immediately on being picked, are later taken out, sorted, graded, and packed for sale as they are wanted.

Pruning can be learned by women and one orchardist reported that a 17-year-old girl cut the water sprouts or suckers out of 5 acres of trees.

One of the most important growers in the Northeast said that in his opinion there was practically no job in orcharding for which women could not be employed. Certainly with better organization next season many more women can be used and used more effectively.

*Peaches.*—In 1943, heavy winter freezes destroyed a great part of the peach crop of the Northeastern States. If that had not been so, many women would have been needed to pick peaches. As it was, small groups of women were organized to pick peaches in Maryland and New Jersey. A Maryland grower reported them as the "best pickers we have ever had in the orchards." This group had been carefully selected for this special job. In New Jersey a peach grower said, "I never sold a nicer crop of peaches—better picked, better graded, or better packed—than I did this year."

In one of these orchards the grower had the women pick in the morning, sort, grade, and pack in the afternoon, which gave the work variety and made it less fatiguing.

### **Dairy Farms.**

Work on dairy farms required residence at the farm. While there is tremendous need of year-round workers on dairy farms of this region, few women so far have come forward for such jobs. Connecticut, however, reported 8 year-round workers, and there were probably as many if not more in New York. The training school at Farmingdale, L. I., offers a splendid dairy-training course for girls, and while those who took it were readily placed there have not been many women who wanted year-round farm jobs.

Nevertheless, there was a real contribution to dairy farms in the work that women did during the summer months of 1943. Many farms wanted someone to take over the dairy work for the summer and thereby release a man for the heavier outside work. This is exactly what many women did. They were up early in the morning, helped to milk with machines and stripped the cows afterward (stripping is drawing off by hand any milk that remains in the udder after the machines are taken off). Some women also milked entirely by hand. They weighed and recorded the milk production, then took over in the dairy, did the cooling, pasteurizing, and bottling of the milk. If cream was sold, they did the separating; if chocolate milk was sold, they mixed and bottled it. And when these operations were over, they washed and sterilized all the equipment—milking machines, pails, cans, bottles, and separator. This usually was a job that took all the morning.

Some of the dairy work, such as bringing the cans of milk from the barn to the dairy and emptying them into the pasteurizer, was too

heavy for women. A full 20-quart can weighs nearly 60 pounds, and a 40-quart can 120 pounds. Two girls together could handle a 20-quart can but men usually did the heavy lifting. Bottling the milk was easy, but stacking up cases of a dozen filled bottles was heavy, and the men usually did the top rows on the small hand trucks. When the work was all done, the dairy was thoroughly washed down; the night's utensils were rinsed and left to be taken care of in the morning.

Both in the cow barn and in the dairy, women were very successful. They were quiet and gentle with the cows, and cows do much better under such handling. Women's cleanliness in the dairy work was outstanding. Their intelligence in learning to operate all the dairy machinery and their conscientiousness in following instructions ex-



GIRLS FEEDING CALVES ON A DAIRY FARM.

actly relieved the farmer of much responsibility. They did not limit their "washing up" to the dairy, but gave the cow barns and windows a thorough scrubbing when needed. They fed and cared for calves.

In the afternoons the dairy-farm workers helped with whatever work was on hand. They planted corn, worked in the vegetable garden, helped with the haying, led the horse for the hay hoist or raked with a horse rake. Sometimes they drove tractors or trucks that hauled hay. They also helped to fill silos, and some cut corn by hand. They tramped and spread ensilage in the silos. Other miscellaneous jobs included setting fence posts, clearing small stones from fields, washing the milk truck, driving the milk route.

On one farm where a married son had been drafted, his wife and another soldier's wife moved in together and one drove the milk route while the other did the dairy work, a half-day job for each.

Quoting one dairy farmer, "The girls at \_\_\_\_\_ Farms have been very useful in our dairy work, having taken full charge of pasteurizing, separating, cooling, bottling, and keeping the dairy clean and orderly, and helpful in other phases of our farm work. They compare very favorably with young men without previous dairying experience and are very much superior to boys in the 12-to-16 age group." Another dairy farmer reported, "They have been very useful to us in the pasteurizing plant and running the milking machines and have been able to do the work required except the washing of milk cans and lifting of the milk into the pasteurizers. Their strong points have been willingness to do whatever they were asked, cheerfulness, and sticking to the job until it was finished. They are much more intelligent than the boys we have had and have not wasted time or shirked as the boys have a tendency to do."

### **Poultry Farms.**

On the poultry farms there was almost no part of the work that some women did not do. They "trap nested" the laying hens, that is, collected eggs from nests that had closed when the hens entered them, recorded the number of the hen so that a complete record of her egg production could be kept, and then released her. They candled eggs (held them up to a light to see if there were blood spots inside) and graded them by size; packed the eggs collected from the nests in cases; kept the feed hoppers and water receptacles filled. They picked and dressed birds for market—a job started with some repugnance but mastered with some pride. They caponized cockerels. Two women who were biologists were sent to a farm where there were a lot of cockerels to caponize and delighted the farmer by their skill. On any poultry farm there is a multiplicity of detail work. On the hatching farms, which ship day-old chicks, the handling of the incubator eggs, the taking out and boxing the chicks, is a job well suited to women. Except for handling the bags of feed, which weigh 100 pounds, there need be no excessively heavy work on a poultry farm.

While women were desperately needed for year-round work on a good many poultry farms of this region, there was far less success in getting them than there was for summer months or crop-harvest periods.

### **Seed-Growers' Farms.**

The girls employed on one of the seed-growers' farms came from a camp of "junior girls," that is, 15 to 18 years old. They worked an 8-hour day, however, and were very satisfactory. They were chosen on recommendation of their school principals and had a thoroughly serious purpose in signing up for the summer. They worked on the farms under the supervision of working counselors. For the first part of the season they did chiefly the weeding and cultivating of plants being grown for seed. All root and bulb crops take two years to produce seed. They are grown the first year, stored over the winter, planted the second year, during which season the seeds mature and are harvested.

After the seeds ripened, the seed stalks were cut, the seeds stripped off, and here the girls' work ended, the further drying, cleaning, and packaging being carried on in another department of the company.

One of the few agricultural-industry poisonings occurred here, when some of the girls got a slight skin irritation from handling parsnips, known as "parsnip poisoning."

#### CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH THE 1943 FARM WOMEN WORKED

##### Safety Practices, Insurance, and Occupational Hazards.

The great majority of the women who worked on farms in 1943 lived elsewhere and came daily to the farms to work. The working conditions discussed in this section relate particularly to the farms as working centers, and not to conditions at farms or camps where the women lived.

##### Safety Practices.

Except as individual farmers were careful, used precautions themselves and expected their employees to do so, it did not appear that any special safety program for the women workers was initiated. Women did not use machinery to any extent in this region, and except for the few who were trained at Farmingdale, L. I., at the Connecticut or the Maryland agricultural college, or in evening lectures as in Washington, D. C., women workers had had little previous experience in the use of even the ordinary farm tools. There were several cases where girls stuck pitchforks in their feet, fell off trucks or out of hay lofts, or strained their backs, but no serious injury was reported.

*Clothing.*—Suitable clothing, essential to safety, was generally worn. Blue denim overalls or dungarees, cotton and flannel work shirts, sport shoes, shade hats or caps, rubber boots, raincoats, sweaters, were all part of the essential equipment. The Women's Land Army uniform, overalls, jacket, shirt, and cap, available by August, was well suited to the work. Frequently there was lack of emphasis on suitable protective clothing. Some women or girls went to work in halters and shorts, which are unsuitable because (a) they expose the body unduly to sun and are likely to result in painful sunburns, (b) farming is rough work and shoulders, back, arms, and legs need some protection against bumps, scratches, bruises, and scrapes, (c) country people, traditionally conservative, dislike and comment unfavorably on so much exposure of a woman's body to the general public eye.

##### Accident Insurance.

Farmers are not required to carry employers' liability insurance. They may, of course, be sued for injuries incurred by an employee in the course of her work. Many farmers did carry such insurance, and some projects—at least one—placed women only on farms so protected. No instance was heard of where women were injured and received, or asked for but did not receive, compensation, but doctor's bills were sometimes paid by the employer.

After the organization of the Women's Land Army program under the Extension Service, accident insurance was offered members at the rate of \$4 for a period of three months with the privilege of renewal for additional periods of one to three months, if desired. There was no shorter term. Few workers took this insurance. Where large numbers of workers are transported by trucks back and forth to work, or from one part of a farm to another, transportation accidents, as well as accidents connected with work, may happen.

### Occupational Hazards.

*Sunburn and Poison Ivy.*—The two chief occupational hazards reported by workers throughout the region were, unquestionably, sunburn and poison ivy. As the first is avoidable, and the second largely preventable, it would seem that supervisors, employers, and workers themselves were largely responsible. Many serious cases of sunburn occurred because of eagerness to acquire a deep tan at once. These resulted not only in acute discomfort but in loss of working time. Carelessness and ignorance caused many contacts with poison ivy, which resulted in suffering and loss of time for the worker. Suitable protection against the sun, especially at first when the skin is tender, would have obviated serious sunburn, and thorough instruction in recognition of poison ivy, the trouble it can cause, and the importance of immediate treatment for it, would have greatly lessened the discomfort and lost time occasioned.

*Tractors and Machinery.*—Girls taught at schools were carefully instructed as to the dangerous and the safe practices in the use of farm machinery and farm tools, and about safe practices with animals; others had instruction on the farms of varying degrees and quality.

The Women's Land Army, various State Extension Offices, and the National Safety Council all issued excellent pamphlets about safety on the farm. These were distributed as widely as possible but did not reach all workers nor all farmer employers.

### Sanitary Facilities.

The farms' sanitary facilities for women day workers were not satisfactory. Apparently no provision had been made for such facilities where men workers were employed and no planning was done for women workers. Frequently the number of women employed was too large or their places of work were too far from the farmhouse bathroom for convenience, but no other arrangements were provided. In some cases a nearby family offered the use of their bathroom. Near the farmhouse the girls used whatever toilet the family had, sometimes an outside privy, sometimes the family bathroom. Before another season, if nonfarm women are used in large numbers, this matter must be given attention.

### Drinking Water.

Drinking water for workers was another matter given little thought by employers. A jug or an open pail of water, sometimes with ice floating in it, was the usual water supply in the fields. Sometimes a "water boy" refilled the container from time to time. Often all workers drank directly from the jug or from the side of the pail or used a common dipper. Around the packing sheds or farm buildings where there was a hose, workers often drank from the end of the hose. Such methods, banned from industry and all public places long ago, still continue in agriculture. Women were at fault, too, for though given individual tin or flat paper cups they would not bother to use them.

It did not appear that the water supply of the farms where the women worked was questionable, though seldom was there any check on that, but rather that the way it was supplied to the workers was definitely unsanitary. (It should be understood that this discussion

is of the drinking water supplied the workers in the fields, not in the farm homes.)

### Hours, Rest Periods, Time Off.

*Hours of Work.*—Where women were housed in groups and hired by the day, week, or month, the hours of work on the farms were 8 or 9 a day: From 7, 7:30, or 8 a. m. to 5 or 5:30 p. m. Where the girls or women lived on the farm, they started work earlier, worked over longer periods, but had more breaks in their work. Some groups of junior girls worked only 6 hours. In many groups where the work depended entirely on good weather conditions, hours were quite irregular, usually less than 8, though 8 was the standard. Ordinarily it was not possible to work longer hours on a day when working conditions were good or make up lost time, because of transportation arrangements. Only very occasionally did women work overtime.

Those living on farms, however, frequently worked late, sometimes well into the evening, getting a truck ready for market, rounding up runaway heifers, or whatever unexpected job called for the whole family's exertions.

While the 8- or 9-hour workday usually meant a day of 10 or 11 hours, and sometimes more, from the time they left home or camp until they got back, the women stood it very well. They were completely exhausted the first few days and exclamations such as, "I was never so tired before in my whole life," "Every muscle in my body aches," were common at evening even among the young and most active. Yet practically nobody quit because of that. An older woman who was obliged to stop and rest for an hour in the shade came back and finished her day's work "to the admiration of the farmer and his wife."

*Lunch.*—An hour off at noon was universal. Lunch was generally eaten out of doors and gave enough time for some relaxation and rest. There was seldom any effort made to provide a comfortable place to eat lunch; a spot in the nearest shade generally was chosen, or if it was raining, a place in some shed, barn, or greenhouse was sought. Women living in farm families had the customary hot noon-day meal indoors, taking the same time.

There was no place where anyone who did not feel well could lie down, though if anyone had been really ill she undoubtedly would have been taken into the farmhouse. There was a lack of knowledge or good judgment on the part of the women as to how to get the most rest from their noon recess, some even using it for active games.

*Rest Periods.*—Women were, on the whole, free to take short rest periods whenever they felt they needed them, even if working on day rates. In fact, they were told by employers or project supervisors to do so. It was not reported that they abused this privilege, but rather that they were conscientious in the use of their time. For piece work, rest periods might mean curtailment of earnings. Seldom was a fixed rest time set, though one employer initiated four definite rest periods of 15 minutes each, two in the morning and two in the afternoon, and felt that he benefited from them by the increased energy of the workers.

*Day of Rest.*—The number of days a week worked by day workers living in units was 6, but frequently they were spread over the 7-day week. Some market-garden farms where vegetables had to be picked

and packed Sunday for the Monday morning market wanted their workers Sunday mornings. They usually gave them Saturday afternoon off in exchange for Sunday morning or all day Saturday instead of Sunday.

*Time Off.*—No regular time off was given the women workers, except those living on farms. As the majority were working for short periods only; no time off was expected. Most of the women employed and living on dairy farms had "every other Sunday off after morning chores." When women worked all summer, individual arrangements occasionally were made to permit a day or week end away on specific occasions.

On the whole, women were very conscientious about taking any time off from their farm jobs, and absenteeism was nowhere reported a problem or even an occurrence. Days lost due to illness were rare.

### **Wages, Rates of Pay, Earnings.**

Almost every sort of wage system was found, piece rates, and hourly, daily, weekly, and monthly rates. The amounts varied so greatly that two things were obvious: First, that no one felt quite sure what women were going to be worth, and second, that there was no standard of wages and hours that would assure some profit to the women workers. The fact that in New York State the Farm Bureau raised an hourly rate that had started at 25 cents for adult women to 30 cents and then to a minimum of 40 cents indicates that it realized women's value had been underestimated.

#### **Earnings at Piece and Hourly Rates.**

The greater part of the crop harvesting was piece-rate or hourly-rate work, and the rates set up were those that had been fixed for regular harvest hands. No concessions were made to or asked by inexperienced women workers whose principal motive for undertaking farm work was patriotic service. At the start they could not make the pay that old hands could. But it was not only a question of inexperience. They had no chance to make a reasonable wage because they seldom had a full week's work. Women usually were employed as the casual crop harvesters had been: "We won't start picking till Thursday"; "It's too wet to pick today"; "I guess this is all for today"; "Let me have 5 girls Tuesday," was the way many farmers at first regarded their women workers.

At one well organized, well set-up camp where 135 women were employed, the actual days worked amounted to only 69 percent of the days the workers were available. The proportion of women who worked at a loss, that is, did not earn enough to cover the cost of room and board (\$10 a week), was 18 percent; these lost an average of \$4.48 a week. Average earnings for the week were \$12.30, equivalent to \$2.99 a day on the basis of days worked but of only \$2.05 a day on the basis of days available. Yet these women were workers of whom the farmer said, "I have never had better packers and sorters than these; I wish there were many like them."

At another excellent unit the average daily earnings were \$2.42 but the weekly earnings, including days of idleness, were only \$10.54. This average was for 58 man-weeks. The highest amount earned in a week was \$17.78 and this was the instance of a piece worker on a

48-hour week who picked up potatoes at 7 cents a bushel. At this same unit on a 35-cent hourly rate one girl on a 6-day 48-hour week earned \$16.80.

Still another unit of 233 women had average daily earnings (piece and hourly rates) of \$2.08. This average was for the whole season and included hourly rates of from 25 to 40 cents. The average weekly earnings for days worked were \$9.56, but it was estimated that if the women had been given work for 6 full days their earnings would have averaged \$12 to \$14.

The foregoing figures were taken from actual pay-roll records. Other camp supervisors reported estimates of average weekly or daily earnings from piece and hourly rates as follows: \$1.80 a day for days worked, hours and work irregular; would get \$2.80 for an 8-hour day but worked not over 7 hours and days irregular; \$15 to \$18 a week; \$1.35 a day (hours and days irregular); \$8.75 to \$9 a week, could barely pay board; \$14 to \$18<sup>3</sup> a week, work was created to keep recruits on hand; \$14 a week. Board at these camps, ranging from \$8 to \$10, was deducted from the pay earned before the worker had anything for herself. At two very small camps picking apples, gross earnings of \$24 a week were reported.

The hourly and piece rates from which women derived the foregoing earnings were as follows:

Hourly rates: 25, 30, 35, 40, and very rarely 50 cents an hour.

Piece rates (picking or picking up berries and vegetables):

Beans: 35 and 50 cents a bushel, 2 cents a pound.

Apples: 10 and 12 cents a bushel, 12½ to 15 "tops" (picked on ladders

Blueberries: 7 cents a quart.

Strawberries: 4, 5, and 6 cents a quart.

Tomatoes: 9 and 10 cents a ⅝-bushel basket.

Potatoes: 7 cents a bushel.

Turnips, carrots, beets: 10 to 13 cents a bushel.

Peaches: 10 cents a bushel.

Probably beans and tomatoes are the two crops that employed the most women, and much of the work on tomatoes—suckering, tying up, picking, sorting, grading, packing—was done on an hourly rate basis.

One employer, a truck farmer, paid his women workers 50 cents an hour; he brought them from a nearby town, not from a farm unit. He said he had been greatly criticized for his high wages but found that it had paid him.

#### Earnings at Guaranteed Daily, Weekly, or Monthly Rates.

Turning from the earnings of piece and hourly rate workers to those of persons paid a guaranteed wage, it appears that the latter system prevailed in Maine and in some unit groups in Massachusetts.

In Maine in 1942 the director of the Women's Emergency Farm Service, one of the first State-sponsored organizations for employing nonfarm women on farms, studied the matter of pay carefully and decided that a guaranteed wage, though small, brought far safer earnings than did piece or hourly rates. Accordingly, in 1942 the Maine WEFS workers got \$21 a month and board—at that time "Army privates' pay." The girls made good. The farmers wanted more of them in 1943, and were willing to guarantee \$30 a month and board (the latter \$10 a week) to the Maine WEFS. The employer paid the

<sup>3</sup> These higher earnings were on picking peaches or apples.

full amount of wages and board, together amounting to \$2.43 a day; \$1.43 then was deducted to pay for the worker's board and she herself received the \$1 wage. This insured to the worker gross weekly earnings of \$17 as long as she worked, and net income of \$7 weekly. The junior workers (girls under 18) in 1943 received \$21 and board, or daily earnings of \$2.13, gross weekly earnings of \$14.90, and net of \$4.90. They worked an 8-hour day instead of the 9 hours of older workers.

In Massachusetts three privately organized farm units had guaranteed their workers weekly earnings of \$10, \$11, and \$12, plus their board. These units kept a working force of about 50 from May to September. The Massachusetts State College paid its unit of about 20 workers more than \$4 a day; they started at \$3 and progressed to the higher rate. This, however, was a State Civil Service rating and was paid from State funds, not by any farmer.

The net income of women who were paid a guaranteed weekly or monthly wage was far greater than that of women paid by the hour or the piece. The average weekly earnings of the workers at one unit, whose work was on market-garden farms, over a period of 14 weeks was \$20.65 gross, \$10 board to be paid from this amount. The women were paid \$3.50 a 9-hour day and had work every day. At other units the averages were \$10 and \$12 a week, plus board.

Where the women lived and worked on individual farms, they were paid from \$30 to \$45 a month and board when they were entirely inexperienced, and raised in some cases to \$50 after they became more useful. Women with good preliminary dairy training, at Farmingdale, L. I., for example, were reported as starting at \$65 with a prospect of a raise within a year to as much as \$80 a month and board.

Though the wage figures give little indication of it, vegetable growers in general expressed themselves as satisfied beyond expectation with the women's work. Several said that the women of 25 years of age and up were steadier, more dependable workers than the younger women, except where the latter (18 to 25 years of age) had a serious purpose and remained long enough to really get into the work. In a number of States the Farm Bureau, the Extension Service, and the United States Employment Service, realizing that the irregularity of work was playing havoc with earnings, demanded that the farmers guarantee work for at least 75 percent of the time. This improved the situation but still did not give full-time employment.

No implication is intended in this report that vegetable growers did not want to pay women all they were worth, but rather that at the beginning of the season they had no idea what women were worth. Of their own accord, some farmers raised the pay of certain workers or gave bonuses, which in turn upset the other workers when it became known. The farmer's uncertainty as to the amount of labor that would be required, his lack of provision of other work that could be done when the weather or state of the crop did not permit picking, and his uncertainty as to how much work women could do or how long a day or a week they could work, were all factors influencing earnings that must receive consideration before another season. On the whole, the group of women who came forward for farm work seemed to prefer a standard wage which, of course, carried the understanding that a worker below standard might be dropped.

In New York, New Jersey, and Maryland farmers paid a head tax of 20, 15, or 5 cents a day for each worker, this money going to the Extension Service toward the operating expenses of the units. As the camps could not supply women workers to all the farmers who wanted them, it was considered fair that those who were supplied with help should pay something for the service.

### **Attitude of Women Workers and Farmers Toward Work and Training.**

By far the most important motive that had impelled these nonfarm women to go into farm work was a feeling of obligation to be of service. The necessity for food was something every woman could understand—food was her business. Then, too, the publicity given emphasized the need for short-time harvest hands, and many women who could not give up their regular occupation were willing to give up their vacation time. The idea of spending that time in the country doing something really useful to the war effort had a strong appeal to city women. Many of them craved a change from their routine work. Though always acceptable, the money that might be earned definitely was not a prime motive; nor had the women much idea of the money value of their services at farm work.

Nevertheless, as the season went on the women did feel in many cases that what they earned was not commensurate with their efforts, and they were dissatisfied at times when the various methods and rates of pay brought equally diligent workers very different earnings. They did not find the work too hard nor the daily hours (8 or 9) too long, but they did feel the need of frequent rest periods. The girls decided that the morning hours were the best for work, and the best for heavy work, and they liked to start early, by 7 o'clock. What they craved most of all was some variety in their work, though they realized this was not always possible. They liked being given responsibility; they wanted to be told just how to do things and to be corrected quickly if they were not doing them just right, but they hesitated to reveal their ignorance for fear of being laughed at. They also craved a word of praise if they were doing well. The women were strongly loyal to the farms where they worked and they felt concern and responsibility for the progress of work on those farms. They were willing to work Sundays when necessary; in fact, some said, "We must get the vegetables picked and trucks loaded Sunday for the Monday market." They wanted to be treated just like any other worker on the farm. They established friendly and business-like relations with other workers, and friendly relations with the farm families and their friends. The few exceptions to these prevailing characteristics missed a great opportunity to gain valuable knowledge and experience and to give to the farmers and their families equally valuable contacts.

The farmers, on their part, undoubtedly were skeptical at first as to the usefulness of women workers. They did not like the idea of giving orders to a woman; they were shy before city women and girls who came from entirely different surroundings. They treated the women with consideration beyond that given regular hands; they selected work for them that seemed suitable and that they thought women could do. The farmers had held off from hiring women as long

as anyone else was available, and when they had to take women they did it without much planning of how to use the new group efficiently.

This conversation between a farmer's son and one of the women workers is typical: "When my father said he was going to hire female help, I told him I was going to quit." "Do you feel that way now, Bill?" "No, the girls are all right; they're doing a swell job and I'm all for them." As the season wore on and the farmers found the women conscientious and intelligent, willing to work hard and steadily, a mutual respect between employer and employee developed. Women were regarded as definitely a part of the labor staff. Farmers sent them about their various jobs. A supervisor visiting a farm heard the farmer call out to a girl, "Say, Betty, tell Jane to wake up and bring the tractor down to pull in this load of hay." (Jane was snatching a regular few-minutes-after-dinner rest.) By the end of the season the farmers and the women workers were friends looking forward to another season of work together next year.

There were, of course, problems to be solved between farmers and employees, complaints to be straightened out, difficulties to be cleared up; but these were not more numerous nor more serious than occur in any labor force, and the Women's Land Army leaders, their assistants or supervisors of various projects, did a fine and understanding personnel job in these matters.

#### Training.

The opinion expressed by the farmers as to the desirability of training was varied. Many, and usually they were on vegetable farms, said they preferred to train the workers themselves. Some said preliminary training would have been helpful. All agreed that the same women would be much more useful next year and usually the farmer "would like to have the same women back." Again and again a farmer felt that his special group of workers was "the pick of the lot." Most dairy farmers believed that some training would have made the girls more useful, but admitted that they were so intelligent that they learned quickly. Such work as milking, however, cannot be learned overnight, no matter how intelligent a person may be.

One reason that farmers were disinclined toward training was that they were afraid workers would either (a) think they knew it all, or (b) have been trained where the equipment was so much better than that of the farmer that the worker might be contemptuous of the things with which the farmer had to work. Little preliminary training had actually been received. Women often were utterly ignorant, even of the names of ordinary tools. They knew vegetables only in their edible parts. The girls' experience with cows, horses, poultry consisted of seeing them from a passing automobile. The processes of planting, cultivating, harvesting, all were unknown to them. They were eager to learn but hesitated to ask questions for fear of ridicule.

The only States that had offered worth-while definite training courses for women were New York, Connecticut, and Maryland.

1. In New York a four-week course at Farmingdale, L. I., gave a splendid grounding in dairy and poultry work, use and care of horses and farm machinery, and general farm practices. This school was open, by arrangement, to women from most of the neighboring States.

2. In Connecticut and Maryland the State agricultural colleges had offered special 2-week courses in dairying or poultry work for women.

These schools had not sufficient applicants to keep running all the time.

The apparent lack of interest in training on the part of the women may have been due to the fact (*a*) they had only a short time to give to farm work and wanted to put in all the time on the farm; (*b*) jobs were waiting for them without any training; and (*c*) if they accepted the free training at these schools, they had to agree to stay at least three months in farm work.

No attempt was made by any State authorities to offer a short series of evening lectures in the large cities fairly close to the time when women might be needed. The American Women's Volunteer Services, in cooperation with the Maryland Extension Service, did hold such meetings in Washington, three evenings a week, just before apple and peach picking.

## LIFE AND LIVING CONDITIONS OF THE 1943 WOMEN FARM WORKERS

### VARIOUS HOUSING METHODS USED

#### Unit Plan.

From all accounts the most successful plan by which urban women were made available for farm work was to have a unit of women recruited from any available source and established in some central locality from which they went out each morning to work on nearby farms (mostly market-garden or special-crop farms and orchards), returning to their unit at night. This method had many advantages for the farmer. He had no responsibility at all for the women workers outside of their working hours. He did not have to provide a room that they found adequate, his wife did not have to cook for more people, he and his family did not have to change their habits or mode of living to accommodate a stranger, he had not the responsibility of providing recreation or supervision. Usually farm families prefer not to take women into their homes. Units of women, established in what is called for convenience a "camp," planned at the request and with the cooperation of the surrounding farmers, furnished as many workers as the farmer needed, whether 2 or 20. The size of the camp group was based on the demand for workers. All the farmer had to do was to call for his crew in the morning and return them at night. If a worker was not satisfactory at one farm, a shift to another farm and another job was tried.

For the girls or women as well, such an arrangement usually was happier. Living conditions were more easily controlled and kept at a definitely understood standard. Food was planned and provided that followed nutrition requirements rather than any one family's eating habits. Companionship of other persons of the same age and actuated by the same motives, the stimulus of meeting other women of varied experience, all tended to weld the group into a loyal cooperating unit. To keep such a unit operating at top efficiency required very able supervision and direction, and the success or failure of such a project often depended on the person at the head of it.

#### Type of Housing.

Frequently it was difficult to find suitable housing for a unit in the area desired, but the ingenuity and determination shown by the

Women's Land Army leaders and the Extension Service County Farm Labor supervisors demonstrated that no difficulty is insurmountable, as the great variety of housing proved.

*Summer Hotels.*—In many cases small summer hotels that did not anticipate a large patronage agreed to turn over all or part of their rooms to the farm units. This was easier for the promoters of the unit, in that the hotel proprietor charged for room and board together, no operating personnel was necessary, and the expense to the Extension Service was very small. The girls' wages covered the cost of board (usually \$10 a week). For the hotel or camp proprietors, however, the margin of profit was slight, since they were supposed to give the girls hearty and nutritious food as well as comfortable lodging.

*Camps.*—Summer camps, in attractive rural spots, also made satisfactory bases for units. The arrangements here were in some cases the same as with the hotels and in other cases the camps were rented outright, the rent being paid by the Extension Service and the operating personnel put in by that Service.

*Tourist Cabins.*—In few instances were tourist cabins utilized. Usually they were not in strategic locations, but some very attractive ones were found that were conveniently situated. Here too the proprietor made a flat rate for room and board.

*Tent Camps.*—In Connecticut the lack of suitable buildings was overcome by using a small inn for dining and living quarters and having the workers sleep in regular army tents. As the season was very dry, this arrangement was satisfactory to the workers. Board and lodging cost \$8.50 a week.

*Market Building.*—In one New York case buildings put up for a regional market a few years ago were entirely rearranged for a unit of about 50 girls. Wallboard partitions were put up, double-deck bunks with springs and mattresses put in, showers with hot and cold water, additional washbowls and toilets installed. The accommodations were very simple but the girls were satisfied. Meals were served in a cafeteria in the basement, originally planned to feed the farmers coming to market. Board and lodging was \$10 a week.

*Grange Hall.*—Another New York unit was housed in a grange hall, remodeled at considerable expense by the Extension Service. Here, too, board and lodging was \$10.

*Chautauqua Conference Camp Grounds.*—The Chautauqua Conference Camp grounds, with cottages and central dining hall, tennis courts, bathing beaches, and other recreational facilities, were offered for farm workers. Board and lodging was \$10.

*Girl Scout Camp.*—The Girl Scout Council of New York offered to house and supervise a unit at their girls' camp, "Camp Wendy." Here Girl Scouts and other workers lived in tents, with real camp living, outside latrines, showers with hot and cold water. Board and lodging here also was \$10.

*Farmingdale School.*—Dormitories housed a unit working on Long Island. The school dining room fed them, and the dormitory house mother had the supervision of the unit.

*Summer Cottages.*—A group of three furnished summer cottages on the beach at Shelter Island, off Long Island, offered particularly pleasant housing for a unit working on nearby farms.

*Country Club in New Jersey.*—The Extension Service took over and rented a country club house and housed a unit of 50 women there. The Service engaged and paid cooks, helpers, and directors and was responsible for the camp. Board and lodging was \$10.

*Boys' Summer Camp.*—In Maryland a boys' summer camp was rented by the Extension Service and run as a joint camp for Victory Farm Volunteers (junior workers) and the Women's Land Army. It had recreational facilities besides board and lodging.

*Private Country Home.*—In Massachusetts the use of a private country home, fully equipped, was given free to a unit of 15 college girls. Board, lodging, and transportation cost \$10 a week.

*College Fraternity House.*—A group of college girls working on a State farm rented a college fraternity house. They divided the weekly expenses for board and lodging, paying \$2 each for room and prorating food costs.

*Private School Buildings.*—Finely equipped school dormitories and dining and recreation halls were rented for a nominal sum to the Unitarian Service Camp, for a unit of girls and boys in Massachusetts.

The examples cited show the wide range of housing facilities. Some were very primitive; some were the height of comfort. Accommodations did not seem to make much difference to the workers, however, if the camp was clean, sanitary, and well run.

#### **Sleeping Rooms.**

Workers usually had cot beds with two to four persons in a room, but in some cases dormitories had as many as 20 cots. Whether or not there was closet or bureau space depended on the type of housing. Private homes or hotels had such equipment; tents, obviously none, but women used hooks and boxes for their clothes and toilet articles. Workers almost always took care of their own rooms. At most units the workers brought their own sheets, pillow cases, and towels and in many cases their own blankets.

#### **Living Rooms.**

Some units had very pleasant living rooms for the exclusive use of the workers, others shared rooms with hotel guests, others had little or no space outside of their rooms.

#### **Plumbing.**

Almost all group units had modern plumbing facilities, with hot and cold water. The number of bathrooms, toilets, showers, tubs, was not always adequate and the amount of hot water available for baths was seldom enough. Care of the bathrooms and the house in general usually was a matter for committees of workers to apportion.

#### **Financing.**

The Extension Service undertook to finance the rental and equipment of these camps in most States. In other cases the workers paid by their weekly board the entire cost, and in still others private organizations or individuals made the camps possible.

#### **Farm Resident Plan.**

The chief alternative to the unit plan was to have the workers live with the farm family. This was done to a greater or less extent in all States but probably more in Maine, Vermont, Connecticut, and New York, which were a year ahead of the other States in their ex-

periments with women for farm work. New York, after the establishment of the training school at Farmingdale, L. I., placed its graduates in farm homes without difficulty.

Residence on the farm was almost essential for those who worked on dairy farms. Usually, if there were two workers they shared a room, and sometimes a bed, though separate beds generally were available. As members of the household, they adopted family habits. If there was no running water, they used bowls and pitchers or washed at the kitchen sink. Some farms had well equipped bathrooms, some had outside privies. Many bedrooms had no heat, not a disadvantage in summer but chilly in fall or winter. The farm workers shared the family living room, and were made part of the family plans. The farmer's wife frequently did the girls' washing. They, in turn, helped her with the dishes.

The girls or women who lived on farms went there of their own choice. They felt that the experience and their contact with farm life was more real if they lived on a farm, and for the most part they wanted to do dairy work as well as crop work. Putting girls or women into a farm family that has established habits and standards requires very careful adjustment. Not only the farmer but his wife and the whole family must have a cooperative attitude to make the experiment successful, and the girls or women so placed must be equally cooperative and anxious to fit themselves into their new environment with the least possible disturbance to the farm family.

Such arrangements frequently worked out most happily. The girls or women gave something to the farm families by their presence that was valued and appreciated in addition to their labor. Farm families gave to the girls or women an experience of great value never to be forgotten. On the other hand, there were instances where girls adjusted themselves very badly to the farm families or where the families failed by their attitude and lack of understanding to make the experiment a success. The degree of success of these placements of women in farm families depended to a great extent on a thorough knowledge both of the farmer and his family and of the worker by the one who made the placement.

### **Individual-Farm-Unit Plans.**

Individual farm units were found less frequently. There were, however, some individual farmers who wanted to employ women and, without help from outside, through their own energy and interest made over buildings on their land or rented and equipped adjacent buildings as housing for women workers. Such farmers also provided the board and gave some oversight to the welfare and recreation of their workers. For the most part they did their own recruiting, largely through schools and colleges. In some instances the workers were paid a wage that included board, in others a wage from which they paid the actual cost of their food and the employer contributed the rent. This method unquestionably puts a much heavier burden and expense on the employer. There is little doubt that if he could have been assured of the necessary supply of women workers when he needed them, he would have preferred to pay their wages and have no further responsibility.

One of the outstanding housing set-ups of the whole region was, nevertheless, just such a unit. A market-gardener who had not only

considerable acreage of truck crops but a good-sized dairy herd had living with his family a sister, of much experience with girls both as a teacher and as the head of girls' summer camps. This woman undertook to recruit, house, and feed a unit of 16 girls from May to November to work on the farm. A vacant farmhouse "next door," with plumbing and electricity, was rented and equipped, simply but adequately; recruits were sought at colleges and junior colleges; a fixed rate of pay over and above board was offered (\$10 a week). A dining room at the home farm was assigned to the girls, the home-farm living room was available, the farmer's sister and mother saw that good and ample food was provided, interested and intelligent supervision was exercised, and a succession of workers kept a force of 16 girls on that farm from May to November with applicants turned away every month and girls registering already for 1944.

### **Inspection of Housing.**

As has been said, in the camps set up by the Women's Land Army leaders and the Extension Service, or by private groups, the sanitary provisions generally were acceptable, though frequently there was an insufficient number of bathrooms and an inadequate supply of hot water for bathing. The Connecticut Women's Land Army leader had all buildings that were being considered for housing units of women inspected by State or local health authorities and recommendations made that the Women's Land Army carried out to bring them to acceptable standards. Unquestionably this was a wise move.

In New York the Farm Labor Division of the United States Employment Service sent their woman representative to inspect the housing that had been suggested by the county farm labor representatives or other cooperating agencies and that had to conform to local health regulations. In Maine the Women's Land Army supervisor personally made all the selection of camps and housing for the groups of women. In Vermont and New Hampshire the Women's Land Army leaders approved the housing used. In Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania the Women's Land Army and the Extension Service took all responsibility for the large camps they operated and saw that everything was up to standard. In Rhode Island, Delaware, and Massachusetts, no camps for women were set up by the Women's Land Army and the Extension Service.

In general it may be considered that the housing and sanitary facilities of women working on farms in 1943 were far better than those of 1942, when some of the camp set-ups offered by individual farmers to patriotic women who went to work from a desire to help were far below any standards of comfort or adequacy.

## **FOOD PROVISION FOR WOMEN WORKERS**

### **Women in Camps.**

The units of women and girls living in camps of various sorts were usually fed in one of two ways:

1. The summer camps or hotels that were leased to house units undertook to both house and feed the workers at a fixed price, usually \$10 a week.
2. The Extension Service (or whatever organization was financially responsible for the unit) rented quarters for living, then hired a cook

and put in a supervisor to have charge of planning meals, buying food, and so forth. Sometimes in very small groups one person held both these jobs, but this was rare.

The first method was by far the easier for those organizing the camp. But it seems doubtful whether \$10 a week could cover adequate food, lodging, and general overhead and still yield sufficient profit to those running a commercial hotel or camp to encourage them to continue if other guests were available. The fear of a guestless season for their resort in the summer of 1943 was the reason that impelled most of them to make such arrangements. Furthermore, the small charge made it necessary to watch food bills very closely. In no cases reviewed were the girls underfed, but neither could much supervision be exercised over what commercial hotels supplied them.

The second and more usual plan was to have the Extension Service provide and pay for the housing for the unit, pay the supervisors, and try to make the food and operating costs come out of the money paid for "board" by the workers, which thus was not the actual cost of board and lodging but was what seemed to be a fair rate to charge the worker.

In a few camps, board and lodging was \$8 or \$8.50 a week; nowhere was more than \$10 paid. In one very small cooperative group only 50 cents a day was charged. According to the State leader, "This small charge was possible because the woman heading the project is a wonderful cook and economizer, with extensive experience in stretching the dollar."

The breakfast given the girls at camps usually consisted of some kind of fruit, cereal and milk, milk or coffee to drink, with toast and butter or more often margarine; sometimes eggs in some form or bacon or french toast was provided, but not so generally as is desirable for hard physical work. The tendency of young people to be late in getting up and then to rush through breakfast so as to be ready for work had to be guarded against. When they did that, they were sure to be hungry before noon and sometimes were known to eat their lunch in midmorning to appease their hunger.

Lunch varied from simple sandwiches (to which farmers sometimes contributed milk) to fruit, milk, sandwiches, and cookies or cake. Especially at first, girls were inclined to eat very heartily, and the number of sandwiches provided often was at the request of the individual. Lunch generally was eaten out of doors and a full hour was allowed, which gave time for at least 15 minutes of relaxation or complete rest for those wise enough to take it.

Dinner on return from work was the hearty meal of the day. While this was contrary to general farm practice, it was in line with the food habits of most of the workers. Effort was made to provide meat several times a week, fish and poultry, soups, vegetables and salads, and such simple desserts as could be made from available materials. Good food at a low price was not easily obtained for large groups, nor were good cooks. In fact, securing a good cook was solving half the problem of assuring the success of the project.

### **Women in Farm Families.**

One of the difficulties of placing women in farm households was that family food habits were likely to be very different from those of the city worker. For one thing, the worker had to adapt herself

to a much more starchy diet than had been her custom. In some cases the food was much less satisfactory than in the units; in others, where the farm family believed in feeding themselves well, it may have been better. What it cost a farm wife to board a worker is hard to say, but judging from the costs of feeding units, the same sort of food should not have cost the farm wife more than \$5 a week, leaving her at least \$5 for her time, overhead, and room rent.

### TRANSPORTATION

Almost without exception the farmers employing women from the units housed in camps called there each morning to get their workers and took them back at night. Farmers have been accustomed to getting young workers from nearby towns or cities in this way, and make no objection because it is considered a necessary part of their work. It can be quite expensive. One man figured that to transport boys from a nearby city in 1942 had cost him, in the use of his trucks, \$1,500. Getting women from a much nearer unit, he figured, would save him hundreds of dollars as well as give him better help. The distance from the camps to the farms ranged from 3 or 4 miles to 25, occasionally more, but usually not over 10 or 12. Long hauls, if they took 20 or 25 workers to one farm, were not considered a hardship. One farmer who badly needed a group of women to pick up potatoes got a bus and took them 35 miles, the girls paying part of the cost. Usually the farmer's passenger car or farm trucks were used.

### HEALTH PROVISIONS

In the State and privately organized projects, women who worked on farms and lived either in units at camps or on individual farms were required to have a doctor's certificate of physical fitness and freedom from communicable disease. This precaution was not required in the case of workers who went from home by the day. The matter was important, for farmers hesitated to give women work that might be "too heavy," and with no assurance of their physical condition sometimes held them off from work they could have done perfectly well, or put them on work that might have overtaxed them. Individuals cannot be sure of their own condition without some check. If anyone has a communicable or infectious disease, other workers living in the same camps should not be exposed to it.

The chief objections to a physical examination were that—

1. Women did not want the bother or expense of it.
2. Doctors were so busy that it was sometimes hard to get hold of them at a time when a prospective worker could consult them.

Nevertheless, the projects that did require it did not state that they had lost recruits because of the provision. A certificate of health was easy to secure for college and school students, the school doctors being able to give it. Other workers had to secure theirs from individual doctors, there being no provision by the Government for such certification.

The Women's Land Army requires that all women or girls going to camp or to farm homes for farm work should first secure the certificate of physical fitness and freedom from communicable disease that the Land Army offers. (For form see p. 34.)

All unit projects had first-aid kits and persons qualified to administer treatment. For other medical care local doctors were consulted. No special provision was made for caring for or isolating illness that needed nursing care; and so far as camps were reviewed, there were no arrangements for having a trained nurse on the job.

### RECREATION

One of the problems that demand attention if women are to continue in agricultural work is that of providing diversion and recreation for the young women. Those who are the most capable workers, as a group, and those who are able to give the longest periods of service are young women not yet tied down by home responsibilities and family cares. They naturally crave recreation. If they are to work for long periods in fairly remote country regions, they must have companionship of their own age, some opportunities of getting away from their work and having "fun." This is true also of the older women, though not to the same extent.

Projects equipped to provide recreation at the camp, or that made it possible to go to nearby towns or to get away for an occasional week end, were much more likely to keep their group of workers contented and have a smaller turn-over or labor loss than those where it was all work, low pay, and little opportunity for play. Projects that had swimming places had the most healthful and most popular recreation. Communities where some interest was shown in the girls and some recognition given of their contribution by efforts to make things pleasant for them were not common. Here again local people watched to see what these women would be like. Some farmers arranged picnics or corn roasts, or made a point, if the project was remote from a town, of transporting workers to a movie once a week. On some projects workers could have friends visit occasionally. Diversions such as these made for contentment.

The girls at camps found resources of their own. They played cards, did group singing, played victrola records, and so forth. Where local amusements were offered, such as movies or bowling, these were regularly patronized. Some workers had a chance to go to grange suppers or community dances. Those who were living on farms went to town with the farm families Saturday nights, took in a movie, and stopped for sodas or ice cream. One of the outings that gave market-garden workers the most pleasure was to go to market with the truck load of vegetables, see their vegetables sold, and watch the whole procedure of marketing farm produce. This was not only recreational but educational, and most farmers were very willing to take their workers, as opportunity offered, on these trips.

It is true, also, that the girls and women who worked on farms cheerfully, willingly, and with a gay spirit contributed materially to the general morale of the farm staff. One farmer's wife said, "I do believe the men enjoyed having the girls around and will miss them when they go."

## CONCLUSION: ADVISABLE PRACTICES FOR 1944 SUGGESTED BY STUDY OF THE 1943 PROGRAM SUPERVISION

The most important conclusion reached relating to the employment of nonfarm women on farms is that adequate leadership and supervision by well qualified women should be provided all along the way. Endless and unforeseen problems crop up in any new field of employment of women, and when such new employment entails not only working conditions but living and social conditions, guidance from someone with wide experience with women and girls as well as with employment problems is needed.

One of the problems that plagued the early advocates of women for farm work, as well as the prospective employers and employees, was where the women were going to live and who was going to "look after" them. The experience of 1943 showed without question that adequate supervision is an essential feature of any program involving women farm workers, and this was one reason why women leaders both in the over-all State programs and in the supervision of individual camps or projects were such an important factor. In recruiting girl students from schools or colleges, the authorities at these institutions wanted first of all to know who was the responsible head of such projects and just what were the conditions under which the girls and women would live, work, and play. They would not recruit their students until they were satisfied that the project would be well organized and well managed. Women who were "on their own" also wanted to know something about what they were going into. Obviously, if girls or women are going to live in a farm family and work on an individual farm they should have some guarantee of the health, character, and standards of the family with whom they will be thrown so intimately. Parents will insist on this. Farm families also should know something about the health and character of the women or girls who are to be taken into their homes as members of the family, for the women who go to work and live on farms occupy a different place from many of the "hired men," who often live quite apart and in no way share the family life.

Where the recruiting, placement, and general supervision of the women were the job of the State leader of the Women's Land Army, she took the responsibility of passing on these matters. Where the responsibility was given to or shared with men placement officers and labor supervisors, it usually was found advisable to have close cooperation with the women leaders.

When women State leaders were able to give only part time to this work during the year (and only two had assistants) it is obvious that in 1943 they could make only a beginning of what they wanted to do.

The job of passing on the suitability of living quarters was one that needed women's judgment as well as men's judgment. A thorough knowledge and sympathetic understanding of girls and women by the State leader played an important part in their successful employment in 1943. Some of the jobs that had to be done were these:

- To find farmers who would employ women.
- To find suitable housing for women workers.
- To see that suitable camp equipment was found and installed.
- To see that sanitary provisions met health requirements and were adequate.
- To see that cooks and supervisors were ready when the camp opened.
- To provide for some recreation program.
- To arrange for meeting new arrivals and transporting them to camp.
- To see that the general morale of the camp was kept up.
- To watch the health of the workers and see that they did not get overtired.
- To see that reasonable camp rules were set up and maintained by the workers themselves.
- To see that good, substantial, well-balanced food was provided.
- To see that the workers had enough work to more than cover expenses.

These jobs are essentially women's jobs. Just as the personnel offices dealing with women in industry have more and more come to realize that they must have women personnel officers to help in handling women's problems, so the farm-labor men will realize that where women come into the farm-labor picture they need the help of women leaders and the kind of supervision that women alone can give. Each separate camp or project needs a woman supervisor who will give full time to her project as long as it is running, and on the quality of this supervision depends to a considerable extent the success of the project.

If 1944 goals are to be met, every Women's Land Army leader must be given the opportunity to put all her effort into this work with such assistants as she may require.

## FARM WORK AND SEASONS FOR WHICH WOMEN WILL BE NEEDED

In 1944 the need for women farm workers will exist in both these divisions of farm work:

1. Farm work that goes on throughout the year.
2. Farm work that has to be done during only part of the year.

The latter may be divided again into—

- (a) Long-season work covering the growing and harvesting periods for all crops. In the Northeastern States this season lasts from March to November.
- (b) Short-season harvesting periods; that is, as each crop matures, extra hands are needed to harvest it for periods of 2 to 6 weeks or longer.

1. The year-round work naturally has to do with animals. The greatest need for help exists on dairy farms. Where girls or women have taken up such work, they have been very successful. Any girl or woman who likes animals can find ready employment at wages which, with board included, are comparable to those of the industrial worker. The number of women in such jobs in 1943 was small but the need is great and increasing. Training with all expenses paid is provided.

2. The seasonal work should not be considered as simply picking various crops, but as—

(a) *Long-season work*, during which market-gardeners who grow a variety of crops from early spring to late fall need workers the entire season. These workers shift from one job to another, taking part in planting, cultivating, harvesting, and marketing. Orchardists have work all through a long season—spraying, thinning, box nailing, picking, and finally sorting, grading, and packing. General farms and dairy farms always take on extra help in the summer for haying, a hard job, but here a woman could release a regular hand for this heavy work by taking over some dairy work.

(b) *The harvest work*, the time when many workers are needed for a short period to cut asparagus; to pick strawberries, currants, raspberries, blueberries, grapes, cranberries; to harvest string beans, tomatoes, spinach, lettuce, carrots, beets, beans, onions, potatoes, peaches, pears, apples, comes to a small extent in spring and early summer but principally from mid-July on, lasting into November.

With this range of occupations and seasons any woman who is willing to make herself responsible for a share in this essential job can pretty well pick her time and place.

*Students and Teachers.*—Students and teachers can utilize their summer vacations for the long-season work on market-garden, dairy, or general farms. The longer a worker stays the more valuable she becomes to her employer.

*Vacation Workers from Business.*—Workers from business, professional, and industrial occupations can apply their vacations to crop harvesting. By concentrating on one job a certain amount of necessary skill can be acquired in a shorter time than if one is trying to learn a dozen jobs. (It is not, of course, so much fun as a variety of jobs, but fun is not the primary object.) If there is a choice of vacation period, workers can find out at what time they will be most needed and if possible fit their plans to the need. If they have no choice, they can make known the time they would be available and leave the assignment to the State Women's Land Army leader or the agency assigned to have charge of recruiting.

## QUALIFICATIONS OF A SUCCESSFUL WOMAN FARM WORKER

Anyone who loves outdoor life and work, who likes animals and the country, starts out on farm work with a big advantage. As many city women do not know whether or not they like such things, never having tried them, it is well to consider their other qualifications.

*First-class physical condition* is the most important qualification of a successful farm worker because the work is primarily physical. This does not mean that the worker must be an athlete in her early twenties, but any inexperienced, nonfarm girl or woman undertaking continuous outdoor work over a period of weeks or months should be sure she is in good physical condition and has the endurance to stand it. Farmers should have the assurance that women sent to them can stand the work. The only means of furnishing such assurance to both parties is a doctor's certificate of physical fitness and freedom from communicable disease. It is earnestly recommended that this be a requirement of all women recruited for working groups under Government or private supervision, or placed by Government or other agencies on individual farms. If girls or women choose to go from

their own homes for day or part-day work, or if they find farm jobs and take them on their own responsibility, no one can prevent it; but it then becomes a responsibility shared by the worker and the farmer and they alone can be blamed for any disastrous effects that may result.

At the request of Miss Florence L. Hall, Chief of the Women's Land Army, and after consultation with doctors and health authorities, the Women's Bureau prepared the following certificate of health and physical fitness to be used by prospective farm workers, covering the essential points simply and briefly. Such a statement is necessary not only for the protection of the worker but for the protection of those with whom she works. Passing a physical examination is required of women workers in many war industries as well as in the various Service organizations.

### PHYSICAL EXAMINATION RECORD<sup>1</sup>

#### Applicants for Women's Land Army

	Check		(Age)	(Color)
	Single Married	Widowed Divorced		
(Last name)	(First name)	(Middle name)		
(Home address)	(City)	(County)	(State)	

#### I. Medical history: (To be filled out by applicant)

- a. Check any contagious diseases you have had:  
 Measles    Whooping cough    Scarlet fever    Diphtheria    Typhoid
- b. Have you had rheumatic fever? \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Have you had tuberculosis? \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Have you had a severe illness or major operation recently? \_\_\_\_\_
- e. State difficulty with monthly periods \_\_\_\_\_
- f. Do you have hay fever or asthma? \_\_\_\_\_

#### II. Medical examination: (To be filled out by licensed physician)

- a. Has applicant detectable heart disease? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Blood pressure if applicant is over 40 years of age \_\_\_\_\_
- b. List any course of immunization, particularly tetanus antitoxin \_\_\_\_\_
- c. List any abnormal physical findings of:
1. Mouth (teeth and gums) \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Throat \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Lungs \_\_\_\_\_
  4. Skin \_\_\_\_\_
  5. Extremities (joint mobility, varicose veins, foot strains) \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Does applicant appear emotionally stable? \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Do you advise this applicant to do farm work? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- f. Do you see any cause for restriction of any activity? \_\_\_\_\_

Height \_\_\_\_\_ Weight \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date \_\_\_\_\_ (Signature of licensed physician)

<sup>1</sup> Developed in cooperation with the Women's Bureau, U. S. Department of Labor.

*Adaptability* is perhaps next in importance to physical fitness. For most women farm work means an entirely new environment. If they are to live and work with a group or on an individual farm, they must be able to fit themselves into a group or family without upsetting themselves, the group, or the family. They must be emotionally stable, able to get along with other people, to submerge their individual likes and dislikes, and above all to refrain from criticism of people or things, especially in the first week or two. (After that, they may find their criticism vanishing.) If there are matters that after careful consideration call for remedy, these should be taken up with the organization supervisor. Tact, consideration for others, and a good sense of humor all help to make one adaptable.

*Dependability and conscientiousness* are two characteristics that help any worker in any job. They are also two that have been generally praised by the farmers; "the women could be counted on and stuck to their work conscientiously." To preserve that reputation should be the goal of every woman worker. Add to it self-reliance, persistence, desire to learn the whys and wherefores of the job, top it off with a little imagination, and you have a prize.

*Ability to concentrate*—that is, knowing how to work steadily, being able to stick to a job persistently—will rate anyone as a "good worker." And concentration includes such obvious things as that too much conversation while at work cannot be indulged in.

*Ability to work without praise is important.* It is generally admitted that women, especially beginners in any new job, do better with the stimulus of commendation. It is equally true that farmers usually are men of few words, and are not given to commendation to a person's face. Workers need not expect praise, even when they know they have done a good job. If they do get a "well done" it means something. (They will probably be told if they do things wrong.)

*Desire for service is a stimulus and a challenge.* Almost all girls or women who take a job on a farm are actuated by a real desire to be of service in the war emergency and a sense of obligation to contribute all they can. But they must remember that, having assumed such obligation in a very essential field, they must do their utmost to make their contribution worth while and not take the attitude that simply by going to a farm they are being patriotic. There is no place on a farm now for women who go for a lark, for a vacation, or to be able to say they have worked on a farm. The real workers will find that they are doing a vitally important job and are also learning much about a vitally important industry.

## QUALIFICATIONS OF A SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYER

The employer who has always been successful with his help, who in normal times could always get and keep help, will have practically no trouble with girls and women provided he will draw a little on his stock of patience. There are, however, some points about non-farm women workers that he will do well to remember and heed.

1. He should instruct his workers carefully and thoroughly at the start and encourage them to ask questions, since most of them know nothing at all about farming. He may be, at first, not at ease with the women, and they in turn undoubtedly feel awkward and embar-

rassed by their ignorance and a little afraid of him. They dread being laughed at or held in contempt (as they often are) by experienced workers, male or female. If the farmer will take time to explain what he wants them to do, to give them a little idea of his farming operations, even take them over as much of it as he can; if he will instruct them by word and by demonstration in the work they are to do; if he will take a hoe, explain its use, show them how to hold it and use it properly, not just tell them to "start hoeing cabbages"; if he will show them how to pick beans clean and tell them why every bean that is ready must be picked or it will be too big at the next picking; if he will make them feel free to ask questions, and will answer them seriously no matter how foolish they sound, he will be repaid many times over. Men who appreciate the difficulties of green women workers and give them a good induction period (and there have been many fine examples of this) have far less trouble with poor work.

2. The farmer should have a cooperative attitude, make the women feel that they are working with him for a common goal—food production. If an employer holds this attitude he will get loyalty, responsibility, and concern for his particular needs.

3. He must give an occasional word of encouragement or praise for good work. Women definitely need and respond to an expression of appreciation of their efforts to a far greater extent than men do, and in a new enterprise they are most anxious to know whether or not they are making good. If there are those that are lazy or slackers, a comparison of their output with that of good workers may improve matters; if they are no good, they should not be kept on.

4. Ability to study the capacity of his workers and find out which ones are best suited for which jobs is important. On one farm, of a number of women workers who tried to manage and supervise a group of young weeders, only one was successful. She did it so well that the whole job, including hiring and firing, was turned over to her, with wholly satisfactory results.

5. He must have consideration for the health and safety and the comfort of his women workers. There are many and varied hazards on a farm. Workers should be warned of those that they may incur at their particular place of employment. As for their health, too long hours or too heavy work are the chief dangers against which the employer must guard. Little personal attentions, such as cool drinks on a very hot day, or a treat of some sort, bring rewards far beyond any effort or cost they may entail.

6. Finally, the farmer must be willing to pay the women as much as he would pay any man for comparable work. If he pays good wages, he may demand and expect good work.

## EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS

### Women's Wages.

The question of women's pay is one that must be given careful consideration this winter if the employment of women is to continue and to expand. Women who go into farm work are not out after "big money." They realize that, come what may, America and the families and children of her allies must have food. They are willing

to work for moderate pay. But they cannot be recruited, for harvest or for long-season farm work,—on the old basis of migratory workers who were expected to come when wanted, to work and be paid for only such days or hours as they were needed and sit around in idleness the rest of the time. They must earn sufficient to pay their board and expenses and something over. If the women do any given job as well as men, they should have the same pay, or if, because of what they can do, they replace a man, they should have the same pay. On the farmers who have employed women, on the State Land Army leaders and the State labor supervisors of the Extension Service, on the project directors who know the women's problems most intimately, on the officers of Farm Bureau, the Grange, and farmers' commodity associations, all of whom have been instrumental in seeing such projects successfully carried through—on all these people, but chiefly on the farmers themselves, rests the responsibility of getting together this winter of 1943-44 and working out a plan of payment that will be satisfactory to all.

It should not be forgotten that there is a farmers' side to the pay proposition. Some women paid an hourly rate may not do enough work to earn it, or if they are paid a piece rate they may do so little work that they do not earn enough to satisfy themselves. These individual problems exist wherever men or women are employed; they are not peculiar to farming. No farmer need keep workers who are much below average in performance. Instances have been reported where a woman who did not do well on one farm made an entirely satisfactory record when shifted to another with a different type of work.

Women do not want the farmer to keep them on out of kindness to them, or because he doesn't want to hurt their feelings; nor do they want to work out of kindness to the farmer because he cannot afford to pay them. The laborer should be worthy of her hire and well managed farming should be able to pay decent wages.

The piece rate should be such that the average industrious worker can earn what is judged to be an amount fair to the worker and to the industry. The hourly rate should have the same aim—the worker should earn in an hour about the same amount as the average piece-rate worker. Unless the work is all on one crop, the hourly rate is much simpler and probably better on the whole for women.

The guaranteed daily, weekly, or monthly wage seemed to work out still more satisfactorily for women. There was very little complaint of women's loafing on the job. Since this is emergency work for women, with service an important factor, a uniform rate of pay for all, which insures expenses and a fair amount over, would seem the best system of pay for volunteer women workers.

It is unquestionably true that no women (or new workers in any job) are worth as much the first week as they are after they have got the hang of the job and their "second wind" physically.

A beginner's rate for the first week, with an increase thereafter, might offer an incentive to workers to acquire skill and proficiency. Farmers must remember that "patriotic service" needs a fair financial reward to keep functioning, and workers who earn barely enough to pay their board will not keep on working indefinitely.

Where women lived on the farms they were paid \$30, \$45, \$50, and sometimes more, a month, plus their board. Women who had re-

ceived training in dairy work, for example, who knew how to milk and do all the dairy work, could start out at higher wages than untrained workers, though the speed with which women learned these jobs was remarkable.

The relation of earnings to the cost of board is somewhat different in these cases. While for groups living together under project management board was from \$8 to \$10 a week, and usually was figured at \$10, the cost to the employer where one or two girls lived with the family—especially if the girls came in as members of the family, shared a room, had the same food as the family, and helped occasionally with the work in the house—certainly was less than under project management but cannot be figured exactly. Because in some States “summer boarders” had been part of the farm income there was a tendency to overestimate the cost of the board. A summer boarder, however, is a very different proposition from a farm worker, and receives very different treatment. So while “board” well above \$10 may be reasonable enough for a summer boarder, \$10 last year certainly would have covered the costs that could be charged to boarding a worker in a farm home. Almost all farmers have or could have sufficient surplus farm products for their own families at a cost considerably below what it costs nonfarm families who buy at retail prices.

### **Working Hours; Rest and Lunch Periods.**

Women seemed able and willing to work a day of 8 or 9 hours, though everyone the first day or two took many “rests” or sometimes definitely worked only 6 hours. Where a short day can be arranged for the first few days, the breaking-in process will be much less painful, and light work, if possible, is desirable at the start. With a regular transportation schedule, however, new workers who may join a unit at different dates cannot always be given special hours. A definite rest period of perhaps 15 minutes coming at a specified time morning and afternoon, when everyone was expected to stop and no one who stopped could be considered a slacker, would, it is believed, increase the efficiency of the women workers. Further, if schedules could be arranged so that work stopped by 5 p. m. the long drag of hot afternoons would be lessened and probably as much work would be accomplished as under a 5:30 or later quitting time.

The lunch period of 1 hour gives everyone time to wash up, eat leisurely, and rest a little. A dry and comfortable place in which to eat lunch on rainy days, a simple picnic table in a shady place on pleasant days, would make the lunch hour more comfortable.

### **Work Clothing.**

Clothing recommendations call for suitability primarily; for example, overalls; work shirts, not too thin, with sleeves that can be rolled up or down; sweaters or heavy flannel shirts; shade hats; rain coats and rubber boots, the last named a necessity if working around a dairy or in a vegetable-washing and packing room. Halters and shorts are not suitable clothing. Comfortable low-heeled sport shoes with clean, whole socks are desirable; farms are dangerous places in which to go barefoot.

The Women's Land Army bib-overalls with insignia, accompanied by shirt, coat, and cap, are attractive and suitable if one is buying new work clothes.

## Sanitary Facilities for Women Workers at Farms.

Sanitary facilities for outside workers were unsatisfactory at most farms. Where more women are employed than can comfortably use the farmhouse bathroom and washing-up facilities, a special place for women, with toilets and washbasins, which will be kept clean and in good order, should be provided. It should be screened, well ventilated, and accessible. There should be enough washbasins and toilets to accommodate the workers without too much delay. If there is running water, washbowls and flush toilets can be installed; if no running water, an outside privy can be made clean and sanitary and enameled basins can be provided. The farmer who expects to employ next season more than two or three women would do well to plan and equip such a washroom this winter. It should have also a simple cot, with a blanket to put over anyone who may feel ill. A Red Cross first-aid kit should be available. With the prevalence of Red Cross first-aid training in every group there is practically always someone qualified to administer first aid in minor injuries or to recognize the necessity of calling a doctor in a case of serious accident or illness.

## Drinking Water.

The source of drinking water on the farms was questionable in very few cases, but it would be advisable to check it with State health authorities. As supplied to workers, however, water frequently was in unsanitary containers, and with no cups provided. Water should be brought to the fields in a covered container with a faucet<sup>4</sup> by which it can be drawn off, and individual cups should be supplied. It is not necessary for workers to run for a drink of water every few minutes; a drink morning, noon, and night, and at the two rest periods, should give everyone ample opportunity to quench her thirst. This drinking-water question arises chiefly where women work all day in fields some distance from farm buildings.

## Job Hazards.

### Sunburn.

The chief caution against sunburn is not to try to get a deep tan the first day in the hot sun. A painful burn is likely to result unless a definite effort to protect the skin is made. The standard ointments or tannic-acid jelly to prevent burns may be used, and a tube carried in the pocket. If a bad burn is acquired, it should be covered with ointment or tannic-acid jelly, wet soda or epsom-salts dressing; in severe cases a doctor should be consulted.

### Poison Ivy.

The best advice against poison ivy is to learn to recognize its three shiny leaves and keep away from it. After coming in contact with it, sopping (not rubbing) the exposed skin as soon as possible with chlorox and water (one teaspoonful in half a glass of water) usually will keep it from developing. If it develops unexpectedly it should be sopped with the mixture frequently. **IT MUST NOT BE SCRATCHED.** Once it is spread by scratching, it will take days to subside. It first appears as a slight rash, then as tiny blisters, then,

<sup>4</sup> A wash boiler with a cover and a faucet fitted is just as good as a 5-gallon thermos container such as canteens use.

if scratched, a blotch of blisters. Washing with a thick lather of brown soap is good if done soon after exposure. Bathing with alcohol relieves itching.

(For general advice for women and girls taking up farm work, see Bulletin No. 47, Food Information Series, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Information, prepared by the Women's Bureau.)

### **Transportation.**

Farmers transporting workers to and from work or from one part of the farm to another in their own cars or trucks should, for their own protection as well as that of their passengers, see that their liability insurance covers such passengers. Serious injury to employees and damage suits to farmers may occur. Safe riding inside the vehicle should be insisted on.

### **Recreation.**

As the majority of women farm workers are young, the planning of some opportunity for recreation is especially important. Swimming is particularly enjoyed after a hot day's work, and camps that have a good swimming place find it much easier to keep their workers contented. A piano, victrola, or radio, singing, informal dancing and games help to make the evenings pleasant. Special treats, such as picnics, corn roasts, going to market with the vegetables, help to break the monotony. When workers are employed not too far away to go home for an occasional Sunday, it is desirable for them to do so. When workers are far from home, and not near any town, an occasional week end off is desirable, unless the worker is employed for a short period only. Some arrangement by which friends can come occasionally for a week end is pleasant.

In farm homes, the farm wife who plans recreation for her family and includes her women workers in it will add to their contentment. Communities that offer such recreation as occasional square dances in the town hall and invite the women farm workers are helping the movement. Churches should notify the camps not only of their services but of social gatherings to which the women workers are welcome.

Lack of means of transportation of necessity has curtailed many social activities, but some planning that will offer occasional breaks in the routine must be regarded as an essential part of the employment of nonfarm women on farms.

## **PROCEDURE FOR SETTING UP UNITS OF NONFARM WOMEN FOR WORK ON FARMS**

In addition to the camps for women farm workers organized in 1943 by the Women's Land Army leaders and the Extension Service labor supervisors, there were numerous private agencies, some farmers, and private individuals who established units of women or girls to do farm work. As this may well happen again in 1944, the procedure that proved most successful in these efforts is outlined here.

There are four major steps to be taken in the planning of any unit group.

1. Find a central locality where the type of surrounding farms needing labor can be served by women workers.
2. Select carefully such farmers in this locality as would like to employ women and to pay them the going rate of wages.

3. Study the housing possibilities and determine what sort of housing and feeding might be available in this locality.

4. Recruit (and select carefully) a group of women for a definite unit serving this specific area.

### Locality.

The selection of a locality where there are many farms fairly close together of a type that could use a unit of women or girls obviously is essential. The distance women will have to be transported must be considered; also whether they will be wanted for long-season work, as from May to November, or only for short harvest periods. On these factors will depend the type of unit to be established. This information is basic, and the time to get it is in the winter when the farmers are making their plans for the next season.

In 1943, after the locality was selected the usual method was to contact the farmers, individually or in groups, and see if they would try women. The experience of those who have successfully employed women should make it easier to get the cooperation of the farmers in 1944. A great deal depends on the kind of contact made with the farmers. It is in no way sufficient in these times to take the attitude "if farmers want women let them come and ask for them." They will not do that. The job of the women leaders is to find openings where women can prove their worth, and the job of the women and girls who appreciate the vital importance of food production is to step forward and demonstrate their worth. It is also the job of the farmers to be open-minded about it, and at least to be willing to try women in a cooperative spirit.

The approximate number of women who can be used should be determined, also the time for which they will be wanted. Working hours and pay should be agreed upon.

### Housing.

With the varied experiences of 1943 as guide posts, no one need feel that any locality where help is needed has *no* housing possibilities. How much money the Extension Service can use to help finance the housing of such units cannot be determined much in advance, but certainly in 1943 funds were available and the probability is that there will be funds in 1944. To have the responsibility for suitable living accommodations rest on a joint State and Federal agency as well known to the farmers as is the Extension Service assures the confidence not only of the farmers but of the public in such an enterprise. Such confidence could easily be lost by lack of careful management, but that very fact makes the responsibility appreciated by the Extension Service.

Any housing selected for a unit should provide the conditions outlined as follows: (a) Comfortable beds, with springs and mattresses; preferably not more than four in a room, though dormitories, if well cared for and well supervised, may be used for short periods without objection. (b) For each worker there should be either closet space or hooks for clothing and a table or box for such things as toilet articles; a mirror in each room is a necessity. (c) Adequate washing and bathing facilities with hot and cold water; if obtainable, fountain washbasins, which will accommodate four or more at once, are time savers; showers are preferable to tubs, and a row of 4 or 5 shower heads is economical of space; 1 shower to every 8 women is a minimum for

hot-weather comfort. There should be at least 1 toilet for every 8 to 10 workers because all leave home and return at the same time; it is possible to have sanitary and well cared for outside latrines if flush toilets are out of the question, but they must be well built, screened, and cared for. (d) A living room where women can sit, read or write, and play games is highly desirable. (e) Some provision for isolating anyone who may become ill, especially if it is a large unit with a number of women sharing bedrooms, is essential. (f) If the unit has more than 12 or 15 workers, there should be not only a cook who will prepare the meals but helpers who will wash dishes and look after the general rooms and washrooms and do the weekly cleaning; such persons might be members of the unit who would take such jobs in turn, for pay, but preferably employees should be hired for the job; women who get up early, work hard on the farm all day at physical work to which they are unaccustomed, should not spend their evenings washing and cleaning. (g) A dining room and kitchen well ventilated and well screened against flies. (h) A place where clothes can be washed, with a washing machine, if possible, several electric irons and ironing boards, and plenty of hot water. (Nothing adds so much to the health and comfort of living as plenty of hot water.)

### Feeding Farm Workers.

(a) In unit groups: Whatever organization undertakes to feed women and girls who are working on farms must be prepared to provide, especially at first, about twice as much as such women ordinarily would eat. Farm work burns up calories, creates hunger. Adequate, nutritious, well-balanced, simple meals—a substantial breakfast, an ample and varied lunch, with a good hearty meal at night, and plenty of milk to drink—are necessary. This food must be bought and prepared with judgment and skill. The experts in nutrition and home economics of the Extension Service are well qualified to give the best of advice and supervision to the feeding problems, whether for a unit that they have set up or for one set up by other agencies.

(b) In farm homes: Whoever is in charge of placing women as workers in farm homes should undertake to discuss a little the eating habits of the family and the new worker, and if after trial they prove so far apart as to make either of them unhappy, the worker should be shifted to another place.

### Recruiting.

For 1944 the Women's Land Army leaders will be ready, with the experience of 1943, to gather recruits in any one of a dozen different ways; but before they go after anyone they should know, from their county farm labor supervisors, pretty much the jobs, the places, the time for which they want their recruits. The women and girls who worked on the farms in 1943 will be the best salesmen of the 1944 plans. This winter, in the large cities and at the colleges, groups of women and girls who worked together on farms are already having reunions. These women will "spread the gospel" to their friends. But it will be necessary for them to know when they are wanted, how many are wanted and where, what are the projects to be set up, and what will be the housing, pay, supervision. The colleges and preparatory schools are eager to cooperate. They do not need propaganda talk to con-

vince them of the need; they want to know what program they can put in that will be most helpful.

The answers to all these questions the Women's Land Army must have ready for the 1944 workers as early as possible, if they are to carry on with increasing numbers the work started in 1943.

### PROGRAM FOR WINTER WORK IN ORGANIZING RECRUITS

A suggested program for women's colleges, and high and preparatory schools, would be—

1. To put in a conditioning course for prospective farm workers in the spring, so that they may get "toughened up." This course should include special instruction on how to use their bodies and muscles properly, that they may accomplish their work more efficiently, with less fatigue and strain. While the opportunity to compare the endurance and physical fitness of a number of girls or women before and after a considerable period of farm work has been insufficient to draw conclusions, indications are that, under proper supervision, their physical endurance may be greatly improved by farm work.<sup>5</sup>

2. A further suggestion for the colleges and schools would be to get all students who will pledge themselves to farm work for their vacation, or part of it, to organize themselves into a Women's Land Army Unit of the specific college or school, with such officers as they may need; such a group might be called together from time to time through the winter as the program for the region develops. They would become, by their organized cooperation, an integral part of the Women's Land Army movement.

3. To hold for each unit a short series of lectures on the agriculture of the region in general, on specific instruction or "indoctrination" in the kind of work women are likely to do, and on the social aspects of farm life.

The same method could be applied in urban centers. City women who worked on farms in 1943 would be requested to come to a mass meeting and organize a New York—or Philadelphia, or Boston, as the case might be—Women's Land Army Division. This could in turn break down into special groups that worked together in 1943—business, professional, or industrial units as "AWVS Unit (American Women's Voluntary Services) of the Women's Land Army," "Business and Professional Women's Unit of the WLA," "Garden Clubs Unit," "Rainbow Unit" (for all without special group affiliation), "Federal Employees Unit," and so on. Such units, once set up, naturally would try to get more recruits for their own groups. Members of such units need not necessarily all go to work on the same project at the same time. Vacations would come at different times, but the whole would be an organization about which to build up an *esprit de corps* that would strengthen the Women's Land Army movement.

Such divisions and units could set up standards, under direction of the National and State Women's Land Army leaders, could elect

<sup>5</sup> Scores of 7 girls tested after 1 to 3 months on farm work:

Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
41	68	55	57	80	81
42	78	66	76		
48	71	75	89		

their own officers, could have conditioning programs before the work season began, could have preliminary training, lectures by authorities on different types of farm work (some of these have proved very helpful and should be continued and extended).

Group planning need not interfere in the least with such organizations as prefer to work independently at recruiting and supervising their own units or recruiting through regular channels such as USES. There is a place for every group. There is need, however, that all groups, however organized, should work and live under good conditions, with fair pay, reasonable hours, adequate and nutritious food, some recreational facilities, and careful supervision. This can best be obtained by having standards set by an organization like the Women's Land Army, working through the Extension Service in every county of every State. It must be assumed that having set standards some means will be provided for the Women's Land Army to see that those standards are lived up to; otherwise, the confidence in and success of the program will rapidly diminish.

Whatever projects are set up, whether under the auspices of the Women's Land Army acting for the Extension Service or under private agencies, a clear and definite statement covering all aspects of the work is of greatest value to the prospective recruits. They should have a statement of the work to be performed, the provisions for board and housing, the working conditions, hours and earnings to be expected, the sanitary provisions assured, the supervision exercised over health, the recreation facilities offered, the equipment the recruits must bring with them and the expenses they must incur. The responsible supervision for the project must be made clear. These are the things nonfarm women going into a new field of work want to know and are entitled to know.

Since she has a choice, each woman and girl must decide where she will put her effort in war work. But she should put it where it is needed and needed now. She is obligated to take a job that bears a direct relation to her country's war needs. The women who will warm the hearts of America's fighting men are those who pick a good hard job and do their best at it. Farming is just such a job. The women of 1943 were just such women.

