

Agriculture has long been a vector for inscribing gender stereotypes; men are labeled as “farmers,” while women are seen as caretakers of the home and family, or farm “helpers.” In recent years, rural sociologists and geographers have investigated the role that women’s farming organizations play in combatting the “invisibility” of the female farmer. My research furthers these studies by providing a cross-cultural qualitative analysis of the AMAPACH, a women’s farming network in Chile, and the Vermont Women’s Agricultural Network (WAgN). Using the social network analysis framework, I investigated challenges that led members to join women’s farming networks and how informal and formal networks enabled them to address their perceived challenges. The study showed that both the Chilean and Vermont women employ a variety of networking strategies to meet their needs. The Chilean women access national and trans-national networks of rural peasants through membership in AMAPACH. Vermont women employ a horizontal method of network participation in that WAgN represents one among many of the formal and informal networks they belong to. They utilize WAgN primarily as a resource for beginning farms and to build relationships among women in the sustainable agriculture community. The fieldwork consisted of eight in-depth interviews with the heads and members of each network and observations of workshops held by the networks over the course of a nine-month period.