

### **Exploring Child Care in Farm Families at the Rural Urban Interface**

USDA and state level policies and programs address the issues of building the next generation of farmers and a stronger agricultural economy through such initiatives as the “Beginning Farmer and Rancher Program” and the “Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food Campaign.” These policies emphasize economic, market and land-use issues. However, household level issues such as the cost and availability of childcare can also impact the persistence and growth of small and medium farms. It is increasingly important to understand how childcare influences farm management decisions in light of the increasing number of women farmers and beginning farmers who may move to areas with little social and family support.

The relationship between affordable, quality child care and economic development has been established from a regional economic and urban perspective; however, child care policy and its impacts on the farm sector have been absent from the discussion. Decisions regarding the family enterprise, such as child care, affect the ability of new farmers to get started and the ability of existing farm families to expand or even maintain the farm enterprise. In order to support beginning farmers and encourage agricultural development, such household issues must be part of the conversation. This poster examines the efficacy of childcare policies in relationship to the social and demographic characteristics of small and medium farms at the Rural Urban Interface (RUI).

Using data from surveys and interviews, this study examines how child care issues impact farm families in five national case study sites located at the RUI.

Keywords: Childcare policy, Rural-Urban Interface