CONTRIBUTION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH

The research and the interesting results reported are one part of a larger study, another part of which is being reported at this conference by the same two authors. See the report, “Breaking the Mold and Paying the Price: Women in Agricultural and Extension Education.” The significance of this research is that a profile of women working in agricultural and extension education at the college and university level in the United States has been developed. It can be used as a benchmark in the years ahead to see if and to what degree the characteristics and factors reported here change.

What is sobering and provides an impetus for action is the finding and the related conclusion that barriers perceived by the respondents are consistent with those identified in other studies in other disciplines.

Also, this study shows that it would be very useful if we had the same profile available on men working in agricultural and extension education in institutions of higher education, both to compare men and women at this time and as a benchmark for use in the years ahead.

PROCEDURAL CONSIDERATIONS

The methods and procedures used in the study were sound. The authors are to be commended on following up and contacting 20% of the non respondents to address the possible question of respondent bias.

With respect to Objective Four, would a better understanding of barriers or challenges experienced as a female college-level educator have resulted if the respondents had been asked to rank in descending order any barriers that they had experienced? Also, with respect to “the greatest barrier faced by women in agricultural education at the university level,” several different responses were used to illustrate barriers, some of which were quite different. For example, “(obtaining) respect from males” is different from “lack of support system of other females doing similar jobs.” Would a different approach to asking the basic question have resulted in greater specificity in describing or defining the “greatest barrier” as perceived by the respondents?

QUESTION FOR CONSIDERATION

As was raised about the companion report dealing with another aspect of the overall study commented upon earlier, the question can be asked again if gathering comparable data from men in post secondary faculty positions in agricultural and extension education might have provided additional insights and information for comparison purposes as it related to the six objectives reported in this paper, especially as related to Objectives One, Two, and Three.