



Entitled to Power: Farm Women and Technology, 1913-1963 (Gender and American Culture)

Katherine Jellison

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The advent of modern agribusiness irrevocably changed the patterns of life and labor on the American family farm. In *Entitled to Power*, Katherine Jellison examines midwestern farm women's unexpected response to new labor-saving devices.

Federal farm policy at mid-century treated farm women as consumers, not producers. New technologies, as promoted by agricultural extension agents and by home appliance manufacturers, were expected to create separate spheres of work in the field and in the house. These innovations, however, enabled women to work as operators of farm machinery or independently in the rural community. Jellison finds that many women preferred their productive roles on and off the farm to the domestic ideal emphasized by contemporary prescriptive literature. A variety of visual images of farm women from advertisements and agricultural publications serve to contrast the publicized view of these women with the roles that they chose for themselves. The letters, interviews, and memoirs assembled by Jellison reclaim the many contributions women made to modernizing farm life.

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