



CONVERSATIONS WITH FARM WOMEN Crowdsourcing Guidelines

Threshold Collaborative uses oral history for inspiration and change. Conversations with Farm Women (CWFW) is a collaborative photo and story gathering project with women farmers and people who eat local food and shop at farmers' markets.

CWFW is one of many projects in which Threshold uses interviewing and photography to inspire new relationships and action. The goal of this project is to share stories and images that celebrate the Strength, Beauty, and Abundance of our farms and the women who work the land, and to encourage others to learn more about farming, food, and healthy lifestyles.

CWFW will be a gallery exhibit, consisting of large scale black and white photographs and spoken word narratives, giving voice to the person whose photo is before the viewer. It will also have online spaces to share images, stories, and recipes and connect people with the women who grow their food.

We are looking for stories about:

- The challenges and rewards of being a woman farmer, why they farm, and what choices they make that are unique to a woman who farms.
- The event(s) in their lives that led these women to decide on farming as a career and a lifestyle, and what advice they may have for women who are considering a career/life in farming.
- Their vision for their farm.

We also are looking for stories from people from a variety of backgrounds about where they buy their food, whether they go to farms and farmers' markets, and why or why not.

Oral History

Oral history is a tradition that honors the voices of ordinary people doing extraordinary things. There is a lot of information about oral history technique, archives, and equipment online. We encourage you to check out the Oral History Association's website for more information and links:

<http://www.oralhistory.org/about/principles-and-practices/>

Although Threshold Collaborative uses long form oral history in its work, it has also adapted a shorter version for some of the projects we do; Conversations with Farm Women is one of those projects. Here you will find submission guidelines and other tips to help you get started. If you have any questions or concerns once you've read these, please do not hesitate to contact Alisa or Amy.

Recording Equipment

Many people now use their Smartphone, iPod, iPad, or iPhone to make recordings. These work well under the right circumstances. If you don't use one of these, inexpensive digital recorders are available for about \$35*. **Transom.org** has excellent resources and recording tips for interviewing, story gathering, and audio editing.

* Threshold also has a number of recorders that we are able to loan out with a deposit.

The Interview

1. **Interview Focus:** Together with the farmer, choose one of the questions below to frame your conversation. We encourage you to have extended conversations with women farmers, but please use your submission interview to address one of the questions listed.
2. **Interview Format:** MP3; Final Interview Length: 2 – 3 minutes.
3. **Editing:** If you do a long interview and want to edit it, you can download free editing software at Audacity. There is also a free trial of Hindenburgh, which we really like. **Editing is time consuming**, so in order to make your submission as easy as possible, we recommend that you make a separate recording of the farmer answering the question chosen from the list below.

Questions for Farm Women:

Please choose one question from the following list to focus your 3-minute interview.

1. Could you describe the moment you first knew you would be a farmer?
2. What is the best thing about being a farmer?
3. What is unique about the way you farm, as a woman farmer?
4. What is the most difficult part of being a woman farmer?
5. If your best friend's daughter wanted to be a farmer, what advice would you have for her?
6. Do you feel a special connection to other women farmers? Could you describe that?
7. What would you like to say to other women farmers?
8. What would you like to change about being a woman farmer?
9. What is the most valuable support you could receive from your community?
10. What is your vision for your farm?
11. How do you see your farm as being part of a sustainable economy?
12. Can you share a moment/memory that best describes your connection to your farm?
13. What ideas do you have that would improve the work and lives of women who farm?

Interviewing Tips

Read the OHA interview guidelines (<http://www.oralhistory.org/about/principles-and-practices/>) and you will also learn how to make your interview as fun and productive as possible. Remember to always record a few minutes of ambient sound in case you need it for the editing process.

- 1. Who do you want to interview:** Figure out who you want to talk with, get in touch with her and tell her what you are doing. Make sure you explain the basics of the project, how much of her time you need and when you'd like to do the interview. Answer her questions as well as you can and suggest that she check out Threshold's web site at thresholdcollaborative.org. So for example you might say, "Hi, this is Ellen. I buy vegetables from your farm stand all the time and I am really interested in how you got started being a farmer. I am working with a not for profit organization called Threshold Collaborative that is doing a story project on women farmers. I am contributing to that project and thought it would be great to talk to you and put your story and photo on their archive. Is there a good time that we could talk more about this?" Farmers' markets are a great place to meet people for the first time and tell them about our project. Print a card with the website address and leave it with them so they can learn more about the project at their convenience.
- 2. Pre-Interview Preparation:** It's a good idea to spend some time talking with your farmer before you start recording. You can chat, maybe even listen to another farmer's story or two on Threshold's website and take a look at the list of questions provided. Please use one of these questions and focus a 3-minute interview on the one you choose. Be sure to test your equipment in the situation you will be recording in and then listen to it. You may find that there is too much ambient noise, the wind is too loud or that it is just right. A porch or inside a barn with some wind block works well.
- 3. Sound Quality:** After you have tested your equipment to insure that it is working and that the sound quality is good, you can start recording. Make sure that the recorder is on a firm surface between you and the interviewee. If you have an external microphone you can also put that on the table, a mic stand, tripod or pin it on the farmer depending on the type of mic. DO NOT hold the recorder in your hand, as it will record at varying sound levels and affect the quality. Be aware that any extraneous sounds (paper shuffling, drinking/eating) will be recorded too.
- 4. The Interview:** Start your interview with your name and the date. Your first question should be asking the farmer to introduce herself and to tell you specifically where she is. For example, "I am Mary Jones and we are on my farm in Hillsdale, NY, in the dairy barn." You can say a few words about your connection with the farmer, tell the audience why you are doing the interview, and then ask the question you and the farmer have selected. At that point you can let her talk and ask open-ended clarifying questions. If you are also doing a longer interview please read the guidelines published on the OHA website and record that separately.
- 5. Release Form:** Each person interviewed **must sign the release form**. Please mail it or scan it and send it to Threshold. We cannot use any interviews that are not accompanied by a release. The release form is attached to this document; print as many as you will need and keep them with you.

Photography

- 1. Equipment:** A digital SLR camera is best, but to make the project more accessible we are also interested in what people can get on smaller cameras or camera phones. An 8-megapixel camera (or better) is preferred. The photos that are printed will be large, approximately 36" x 48", or larger, so images smaller than 1MB will not work.
- 2. Take lots of photos!** I try to take 30 – 100 photos to get 5 really great ones. Natural lighting is always best. Try to get images that have good contrast.
- 3. Submit 3 – 10 of your best photos:**
Size: Hi-Res (300 dpi) digital images, 1 – 5MB file sizes (or larger).
Format: JPEG (.jpg) in black and white or color.

Submission

1. **Preferred:** Please upload your photos, audio, and signed release form to Dropbox: <https://www.dropbox.com>
You'll need to create an account – it's free; share with: amy@thresholdcollaborative.org
2. **or** attach the documents to email(s) and send to: amy@thresholdcollaborative.org with the title or subject line: CFWF Submissions, image #1 (#2, #3, etc.) or audio #1 (#2, #3, etc.)
3. **Include in the body of an email:** your name, the Farmer's name, the date and location of the interview.
4. **Please include with your Audio Submission** the number of the question you are answering.
5. **Also, please include** a mailing address and t-shirt size for the farmer so we can send her a Tractor Girl T-shirt!

We hope that you can help us expand the reach of this exciting project. Thanks so much and Have FUN!

– Amy & Alisa

Threshold Collaborative
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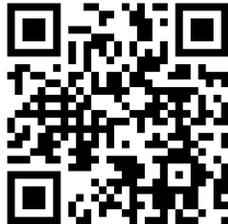
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Have questions or need help? Email, call, or Skype Amy.



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CONVERSATIONS WITH FARM WOMEN
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Release Form

Thank you for participating in Conversations with Farm Women, a project of Threshold Collaborative. We collect ideas and stories from people in order to effect positive community change. We appreciate your willingness to share your ideas and stories. This form will serve as a statement of your willingness to participate and a release of information.

1. I (name, please print) _____ agree to this interview.
2. If the person being interviewed is a minor, I (name) _____
(relationship) _____ give my permission for him/her to be interviewed.
3. I agree to let Threshold Collaborative & their collaborators use this interview for education, advocacy, and/or publicity about its work.
4. I would like to be contacted when my interview is published. email: _____
5. Privacy Option: (check one) I do I do not want any identifying information used.

Signed _____ Date _____



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Signed _____ Date _____