

Sussex and Surrey Courier 18th March 1916, page 2

TALKATIVE WOMEN.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir: Having heard that there are many women in Copthorne, Crawley Down and Burstow parishes who boast they are quite capable of farming and can take the place of experienced men, may I ask them this question: Can any of these women manage a young cart horse or take a pair of horses and plough the land, and prepare the ground, to sow or drill the seed? Is it possible that any of these women can undertake the responsibilities of working the many kinds of machinery and implements that are used on a farm? There are a great many more questions to approach them on. Some of these talkative women are even afraid of cows if they meet them on the road, or have to pass through a field where they are grazing. In this case how do they think they are going to manage the many kind of other animals that are kept on a farm which are far more vicious? They will find themselves in a great predicament. The talkative women imagine there are only light duties to be done on a farm. I fear they have no modesty left or they would not interfere with this work. It may be they have forgotten the farmer has to breed nearly all his cattle. I consider this is not suitable work for a woman to do. They will find they have made a great mistake by interfering with the work of a farm and that it takes a man nearly a lifetime before he can call himself an experienced farmer. If they are so eager to do farm work first let them learn the duties of a farmer's wife before ever dreaming of undertaking to do farm work. If they still wish to argue let them pay a visit to some of the local farms and there they will find horses and farming implements awaiting them. As all their men will soon be taken for the war, this will give them the chance of taking their places, which they boast they can do.

Yours &c.,
AN EXPERIENCED FARMER.

Sussex and Surrey Courier 25 March 1916, page 5, column f

Letter to the Editor.

TALKATIVE WOMEN.

Sir: One feels very thankful that there are not many British farmers who hold the opinions expressed by your correspondent "An Experienced Farmer," or, at any rate, that they have the good sense not to publish them abroad. From the tone of his letter one would suppose that, for no reason or necessity, women are pushing themselves into the farming industry, for which they have neither aptitude nor experience. If your correspondent is unable to appreciate the fact that thousands of women, at considerable personal inconvenience, and from purely patriotic motives, have offered their services for work on the land, it seems a pity to say so. It is also unfortunate that while your correspondent announces that women "will find they have made a great mistake by interfering with the work on a farm," Lord Selborne and the Board of Agriculture are making an urgent national appeal for 400,000 women to come forward at once for agricultural labour.

It is obvious that your correspondent entirely fails to grasp the great issues at stake. He harps upon "these talkative women" who boast and argue, &c. (one would remind him, in passing, that it takes two to make an argument), while the only thing that any patriotic man or woman cares about is that the vital question of England's food supply is in jeopardy, and women must come in and fill the breach. If this crisis is to be tided over one hopes that when all "An Experienced Farmer's" eligible men have been called up, he may find some of these talkative eager women who will step in and carry on, not for the pleasure of enlightening him on one or two points, but because the most important industry in the country at this moment, next to munitions, is the cultivation of the land, and women are going to see to it, as far as they are concerned, that in this matter we shall not be found wanting.

I remain, Sir, your obedient Servant,
A WOMAN WORKER ON THE LAND.