

# CFW committed to original goals

One cold Saturday last January, a small group of farm women from Grey and Bruce Counties gathered for a potluck dinner. The occasion was Concerned Farm Women's annual meeting; an opportunity to look back on five years of effort and achievement.

CFW formed in the fall of 1981 when over 250 women turned out for a meeting, organized by two Chesley-area farm women, to express their worries about high interest rates and low prices. One of the first projects was a survey of stress in farm families, carried out under supervision from the University of Guelph. CFW published the findings in a book **The Farmer Takes A Wife** by Gisele Ireland, which has sold over 4,000 copies. A slide-tape presentation and a video were also prepared and used widely, as the survey generated a great deal of interest across Canada, the United States, and beyond — one woman even phoned her support from Australia!

Political lobbying remains a priority with CFW, and its members frequently prepare briefs for governments and task forces, and have met with officials from all levels of government. Several years ago, Dennis Timbrell made his first public appearance as Minister of Agriculture and Food at a CFW dinner, and recently the present Minister of Agriculture and Food Jack Riddell was presented with a copy of our new video. In an unusual approach, last year, copies of **A Farmer Takes A Wife** were mailed to the spouses of all Members of Parliament. CFW has also worked with the liaison committees of major farm organizations in Ontario to present a united farm voice on selected issues.

CFW believes that a broad base of support beyond the farm community is necessary to bring about the changes that farmers are seeking. In addition to filling a wide range of requests for speakers, the group has recently released a second video, entitled *Rural Roots, Urban Connections*. Designed for the urban viewer, it eloquently presents the case for maintaining the family farm. Education efforts are not directed only to the consumer. In 1985, a guide to

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property and credit law for farm families was published, and a revised edition is to be published later this year.

CFW has recognized the changing needs of farm women. In co-operation with the Women's Institute, a summer pilot project explored alternative approaches to child care. CFW also sponsored a parents' group in south Bruce which researched the feasibility of various child care programs designed for farm families.

The group remains committed to its original goals: working for the interest of farmers, working with

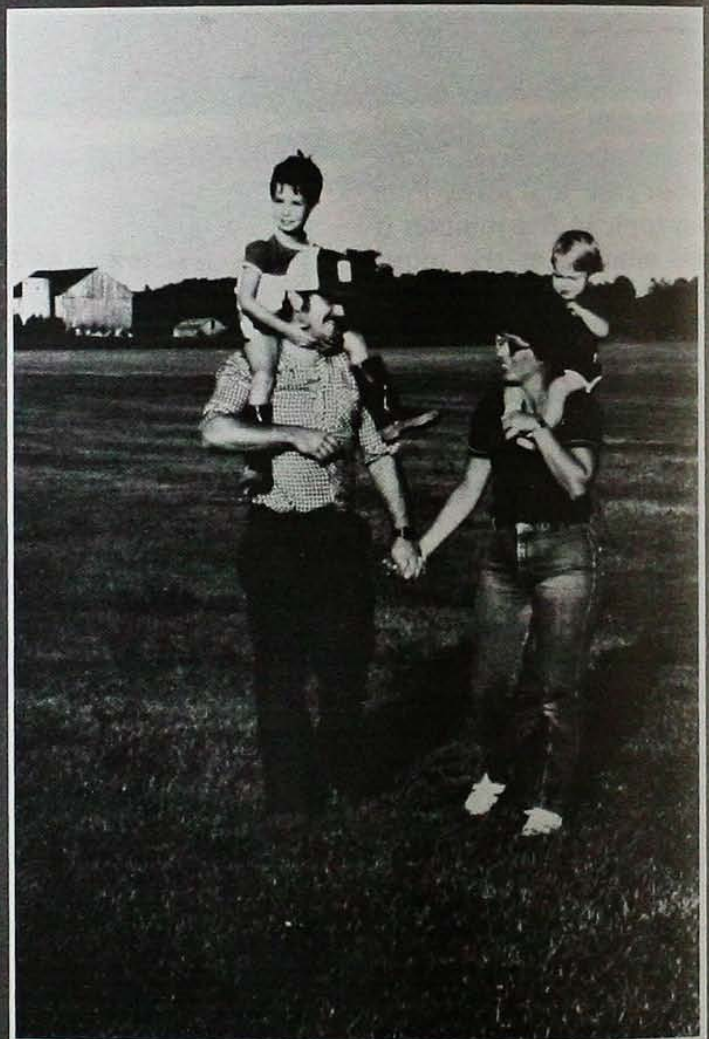
other farm organizations, and promoting greater understanding of farm issues. For example, a Toronto high school teacher whose drama students were presenting a play called *The Farm Show*, recently requested a speaker. The result? An enthusiastic busload of students arrived in the Warton area for a two-day visit crammed with farm tours, hearty meals provided by local WI members, and of course showing of CFW's videos!

The past five years have been difficult ones for many farm families. The financial strains have been difficult for many, to much for some. CFW members have worked with other

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## THE FARMER TAKES A WIFE

A STUDY BY CONCERNED FARM WOMEN



GISELE IRELAND