

**Let's ~~not~~ talk about a gender**

**“ Encouraging and facilitating women's access to the sector is good for everyone. ”**



**Cristina Rodríguez**  
Farmer, Copiso Soria Sociedad Cooperativa, Spain




## WHO IS CRISTINA RODRÍGUEZ?

### **Can you explain a little more about your background? (city/country; training, etc.)**

My name is Cristina Rodríguez and I am from Soria. I studied Technical Engineering in Industrial Design and a Master's in Logistics. After detecting an illness in my father, I decided to return home and stay at my father's farm. I have a rain-fed cereal and oilseeds farm.

### **What was your experience at university? (Gender balance?)**

My experience at university was very positive. The job opportunities I got were always in line with my education, skills, and abilities. I never thought there was anything I could not achieve if I set my mind to it. When I changed my work path and started managing my farm, it was no different.

### **What advice would you give to any young person starting to build a career similar to yours today?**

I think that the most important thing when you start to be a farmer is to have a great desire to work, a great desire to learn, and to have the will, enthusiasm and determination. If you meet these five requirements, nothing will stand in your way.

### **Do you feel that your career would have been different if you were a man?**

Obviously, I would have had to break fewer barriers in terms of stereotypes. But in terms of the work I do, everything would have been the same, nothing would have changed. Agriculture is not a man's or a woman's job, it's the job of the person who does it, no more and no less.

## CONCERNING THE COOPERATIVE TO WHICH YOU BELONG

### **Why did you choose this cooperative organization?**

Copiso is a cooperative with more than 1200 members. It has a history and an accredited growth. The staff working in the cooperative carry out excellent management and all this translates into benefits for its members. From my point of view, agriculture is a very individualized sector, and cooperatives allow the sector to be collectivized and to gain strength in the markets.

### **Would you say that agriculture is really a man's world, or do you see more women in this industry as well?**

At the moment it is still a male-dominated world without any doubt. Little by little, there are beginning to be more women, but there are still very few of us who dare to enter the sector. Let's hope that the trend will make a difference in a few years'

time. There are more and more female agricultural technicians and more and more female farmers.

**Can you mention some of the gender equality measures your company has in place, which do you think is the best / most efficient?**

In Copiso, they encourage the incorporation of women on the board of directors and management bodies. They carry out all kinds of gender balance measures.

**What could they do as a next step? What should agricultural enterprises do better?**

I can only talk about my cooperative, which is the one I know, and it really works well. I don't think any further action is needed from them. Based on my own experience, I can say that I have been given many opportunities to actively participate in the cooperative. The fact that there are still few women in the sector, I do not attribute in any way to the functioning of the cooperatives, but perhaps to the prejudices and stereotypes created around the profession.

**YOUR MESSAGE**

**What would you say to your 10-year-old self?**

To my 10-year-old self, I would say to make the decision to work in agriculture sooner. It was really something I had at hand, and I wasn't able to take it up until my father got sick. After several work experiences before I joined agriculture, I can say that it is the job I am happiest in. I have learned to live slowly and to enjoy the small pleasures of life that nature offers us. I can say that when I started in this, I never thought that I would like it so much and that I would be so happy working in it.

**What would you like to say to the decision-makers?**

I would tell them that it is necessary to promote the inclusion of women in the sector to increase the proportion of women. Women are needed in rural areas to set the population. The professions par excellence in rural areas are stockbreeding and agriculture, finding another type of work in a village is sometimes very complicated. Encouraging and facilitating women's access to the sector is good for everyone.



Cristina Rodriguez  
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