ATTITUDES OF MICHIGAN FARMERS TOWARD GOVERNMENT PRODUCTION CONTROL PROGRAMS AS SHOWN BY A 1954 SURVEY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the attitudes of the farmers toward the government production controls and to analyze the relationships between these attitudes and certain characteristics of the farm and farmer.

The information for this study was gathered by personal interviews with 414 Michigan farmers in the summer of 1954. The sample consisted of farmers located in four areas which represented different types of heavy commercial agriculture. Only those farmers who had an allotment of 15 acres or more of wheat were interviewed. It was on farms where the wheat acreage was cut that the farm operators would be most aware of the government control programs. In addition, various managerial decisions were necessary on these farms. The characteristics of the farmer considered in the study as possibly influencing his attitudes toward the government programs were: farming experience, age, tenure status, per cent of income from farming, membership in a farm organization, and attendance at meetings held by the county agricultural agent. The farm characteristics considered were: total farm acreage, total tillable acreage, type of farm, and intensity of livestock program.

It was found that most of the farmers had thought about continued acreage allotments but were not particularly concerned about possible future effects on their farm operations and organization. While the farmers were willing to accept acreage allotments, they were more reluctant to accept more stringent controls such as marketing quotas. Part of this reluctance was probably due to the desire of the farmers to have

a more complete freedom of choice as to whether they would or would not comply with allotments. In spite of the possible effect of the marketing quotas on farm operations, only about four out of ten farmers took part in the balloting in 1954. Over two-thirds of the farmers thought the government would enforce the penalty for wheat sold on the market, but only about half as many farmers thought the penalty would be enforced for wheat fed on the farm.

Although the farmers indicated they did not desire marketing quotas, over 50 per cent of the farmers believed that all commodities supported should be supported at the same percentage of parity. Of those farmers who didn't believe that all products should be supported equally, nearly one-half believed that the support level had to be hinged in some manner to the surpluses of the individual products.

During the four year period between 1950 and 1954 the farmers became more favorable to the direct payment plan of supporting farm income. This may have resulted because farm prices had fallen under the storage program. Also, it may have been that after operating under the storage program for four more years, the farmers were just looking for better methods and the direct payment plan was readily available as an alternative. The farmers had indicated an acceptance of acreage allotments and price supports, but there should be a better system of communication to provide more information and alternatives to the farmers in order that they may develop a more informed opinion.

Approved

Lawrence Witt

Major Professor

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The author assumes full responsibility for any errors that may be present in this manuscript.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of this Study

This study is based upon a segment of a farm management survey taken in the summer of 1954. The general purpose of the survey was to find out the effects of the production control programs of the United States Department of Agriculture upon Michigan farms. It is the purpose of this study to determine the attitudes of the farmers toward the government programs and to analyze the relationships between these attitudes and the characteristics of the farm and farmer. In addition, the study provides an insight into the farmer's estimate of the future effects the programs will have upon his farming operation.

In pursuing the objectives outlined above, all facets of the government programs had to be considered including: (1) How did the farmers feel toward marketing quotas and the penalty enforcement, whether it be on wheat fed on the farm or sold in the market, (2) Did the farmers believe controls would be continued and what effect would a continued allotment program have on their farm, (3) Would farmers comply with allotments on individual crops and total farm acreage allotments, (4) How did the farmers feel about support levels and how did they think the level should be determined, (5) What did the farmers know about, and what were their attitudes toward the storage programs versus the direct payment plan?

Importance of this Study

Many problems have arisen under the present legislation which must be studied if solutions are to be found that will allow future agricultural programs to operate with less difficulty and with fewer conflicts between the objectives of the programs and the ends of society.

In 1954, for the first time since World War II, there was an attempt to control agricultural production in Michigan through the use of marketing quotas. The 1954 wheat crop was the first harvested under allotment and marketing quotas since 1942. Marketing quotas for wheat meant that all farmers who had wheat acreage allotments of more than 15 acres were required to comply with these allotments. Amounts grown in excess of this allotment were subject to a heavy, and what amounted to a prohibitive, tax. The cutback in wheat acreage for 1954 averaged about 20 per cent nationally with another 13 per cent cut in the 1955 crop. Corn also came under the allotment, but the penalty was less severe in that the farmer who failed to comply lost only his eligibility for price supports on the corn crop.

Some of the elements leading up to the current controls were anticipated for some time. For example, during the war (World War II) and post war years while wheat production was expanding, it was known that normal market outlets would not move the wheat crops being produced. The increased wheat production could be attributed to relaxation of controls of wheat during World War II and the reconstruction period 1946-1949, and to the sharply higher price paid for wheat. The Korean War was considered important enough to further delay the implementation of effective controls on production. Further increases in wheat

production can be explained by advances in wheat growing technology and by support prices which reduced price uncertainty and further encouraged expanded wheat production.

Faced with marketing quotas on wheat and acreage allotments on other crops, the farmer had some difficult managerial decisions to make. The decisions were difficult not only because of undetermined future government policies, but also because of the uncertainty of prices, yields, and a lack of knowledge on production methods of other enterprises that might be used on the diverted acres.

The decisions made by these farmers will not only affect those making the decisions, but other farmers throughout agriculture as well. If there is a heavy shift from a controlled crop to another particular crop it may lead to surpluses in this second crop. This in turn will affect farmers who had previously been growing only uncontrolled crops. As a result of these new surpluses, lower prices may prevail or production controls and price programs may be extended. Farmers previously unaffected will thus be forced to change from their normal path of decision making to a new framework in making managerial decisions.

The acreage allotments make cuts across the board without regard to the farm or farm setup. While this may be administratively efficient for the nation as a whole under the present policy, it is not necessarily consistent with maximum efficiency within the individual farm. In many cases there will be a drastic effect on the efficiency of farm operation because an optimum size production operation had been established. Of further consequence to the farmers is the impact of the allotments on his capital position. Just how the farmer will adjust his capital

assets depends in a large part on how he looks to the future. If he believes the present allotments are just a temporary situation, and that ways will be found to end the surpluses without controls, few adjustments will be made. If, on the other hand, he believes the current situation will prevail over several or many years with production potentials under controls, he may make long range changes such as adding enterprises which are more difficult to start and to liquidate.

A program, if it is to function properly, must be accepted by the farmers. Too many times these programs are designed within a political framework and thus do not reflect the true economic conditions. The farm programs are political because they must be passed by Congress and accepted by the President, or passed over his veto. At times Congress sees the farm programs as election issues and tends to modify the program in the hope of gaining votes in the next election. Under such a situation permanent long-range programs are difficult to establish.

Until the 1930's agriculture operated under essentially competitive conditions. The free market system did keep the market cleared by moving the commodities from the producer to the consumer but it was also unstable and wasteful. Price uncertainties contimually harrassed the farmers. During inflationary periods, farm prices tended to rise faster than costs. But in deflationary periods farm costs tended to stay at high levels while the prices of farm products dropped rapidly. Farmers cannot adjust production quickly; crops are planted months ahead of final harvest, and it takes years to establish a livestock program. Moreover, agriculture in the last decades has become a declining industry in the sense of labor required to produce the agricultural products

demanded. The structural nature of agriculture was such that fast enough changes in resource use were difficult to achieve. This meant that some of the production was out of step with demand and resulted in lower returns to those resources. In effect, the human resources were not effectively moved out of agriculture. Even when there was a transfer of labor resources into and out of agriculture it was not at all consistent with farm prices. In times of falling farm prices people not only stayed in agriculture, but also migrated to the farm. On the other hand, as farm prices rose, migration from the farm increased and the more farm prices increased relative to other prices the greater the movement of people out of agriculture. This happened because urban employment opportunities were available only when all prices were high.

Agricultural programs were instituted as emergency measures to furnish aid and assistance to meet short-run problems that were distressing agriculture. The free market was unable to cope with the varying characteristics of agricultural production and consumption. Agricultural production is highly seasonal and long production periods are involved, thus adjustments to meet demands are not easy. Because of the competitive nature of agriculture, each producer makes his own individual changes. For the industry as a whole this can mean a total production greatly out of step with demand.

Weather conditions have a further effect on the total production. Even though planned production was consistent with anticipated consumer demands, unpredictable variations of the weather would greatly change expected yields and thus total production. Again, supply and demand would be out of equilibrium.

The government programs have changed from being just emergency measures to the status of being regular duties of the federal government. Most of these programs have attempted to increase the farmer's income by raising the prices of some of his products. With the higher prices, production controls were necessary in order to attempt to reduce production to a level consistent with demand or to prevent expansion in production. It could be said that the programs attempted to set up monopolistic conditions--that is, to maintain or raise prices by controlling the supply.

The government programs, however, have not been completely successful. One important reason is that there has not been 100 per cent participation in the program by the farmers. When the programs were set up it was believed that most farmers would participate because they would stand to receive higher incomes and have less price uncertainty than nonparticipators. Also, it was thought that by making participation in the acreage control program a prerequisite to price support eligibility, overproduction would be prevented. Neither of these assumptions have proved to be completely true in the operation of the price support and acreage control programs. Another reason the programs were not completely effective was that many farmers who did cooperate with the acreage allotment tended to adopt better production techniques. The added production per acre in some cases partially or even totally offset the anticipated effect of the reduced acreage.

There have been many theories advanced as to why all farmers have not taken advantage of the price support programs. Many times these theories are based upon values that the farmers are believed to have rather than the ones he really holds. To those working in the legislative

branch of the government and operating in a political framework, the farmer may even appear irrational. However, these apparent differences in values might not be of such consequence if they were discussed in marginal terms instead of absolute terms. Really there aren't any absolute values such as complete freedom or complete security in existence today. Under the marginal analysis any differences which might rise between the government and farmers could be settled on the basis of determining a proper substitution rate between values. When such conflicts between values are viewed as marginal conflicts there is probably a range of complementarity at the margins, whereas if the values were considered to be absolute there most certainly would be a direct conflict. This means that there can be programs which would increase both freedom and security within certain ranges but if carried to extremes would result with one or the other value decreasing.[1]

Since the agricultural programs have now been operating for over two decades it would appear that some type of government administration will continue into the future. The present trend would seem to indicate that there will be a further centralization in the administration of all government programs and that more production controls will be necessary. A greater centralization of controls is almost inevitable. Allotments must be on a national basis because each area and community naturally wants to get as high an allotment as possible. Further, farm prices are determined on a national and international basis. Most of the programs

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[1]Dale E. Hathaway, "Agricultural Policy and Farmers Freedom," Journal of Farm Economics, Volume XXXV, No. 4, November, 1953, p. 499.

are now being used to maintain high prices rather than as emergency methods to prevent "depression" prices. Acreage controls won't be enough to keep the high prices. In addition, marketing restriction will probably be necessary to prevent further stockpiling of surpluses.

It will not be easy to find a farm program that will be compatible with the national, international and individual goals. Each individual has his own set of values and thus there are bound to be differences in goals desired by these individuals. Most of the time the objectives and goals of the programs are set up by farm organization leaders and various politicians who profess to be speaking for the farmers. The leaders or representatives are able to do this because there are many decisions to be made on which the farmers have no definite or strongly held opinions. The leaders then attempt to justify their decisions or positions by trying to convince their constituents that the action taken was in the best interest of the entire political area or organization membership. Thus their word cannot be taken as representing farmers but rather must be considered as their own opinions to which the majority of their constituency do not object.[2]

Many times, however, their word is taken as final. It would appear that there should be a certain amount of research carried on at the farm level to determine just how the programs really are working, how effective they are, and how well local values are being attained. In addition, such studies would be useful in determining the attitudes of the farmers toward the government programs.

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[2]D. E. Hathaway and L. W. Witt, "Agricultural Policy: Whose Valuations," Journal of Farm Economics, Volume XXXIV, No. 3, August, 1952, p. 308.

According to Geoffrey Shepherd such research should not start out with a proposition that welfare is or is not best served by free market prices, but rather that there should be an inquiry into the different results of different programs and policies. He goes on to say that when those results have been determined and presented as clearly as possible, the voters can judge intelligently how much of each (efficiency, security, etc.) they want, according to their set of values.[3]

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[3]Geoffrey Shepherd, "What Can a Research Man do in Agricultural Price Policy?" Journal of Farm Economics, Volume XXXVII, No. 2, May, 1955, p. 314.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Until 1929 farm policy on the national level was directed mainly toward increasing the availability of education and research to the farm, regulating the actions of those with whom the farmer dealt, and providing more liberal credit. This sort of legislation did not prove to be of significant help to the farmers in the 1920's. Farmers were plagued with low prices and they saw the cure as being higher prices for farm products. The Agricultural Marketing Act of 1929 was the government's first attempt to take part in stabilizing agriculture. It was a compromise measure and proved to be of little value. It was not until the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933 that the government became involved in direct participation in farm operations. Price increases were the means by which it was hoped to reach the goal of income parity. Also in this Act considerable emphasis was placed upon curtailment of production. There were many changes in the next few years; some portions of the original act were declared unconstitutional, but in general, subsequent legislation broadened the scope of the Act of 1933.

In 1938 the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938 was passed and it is the basis of the present program. Under this act price supports were made mandatory on certain crops rather than discretionary on the part of the Secretary of Agriculture. The act in addition to providing for acreage controls also supplemented the controls with marketing quotas, a much

more drastic method of reducing production. Another outstanding feature of this act was the addition of the ever-normal granary concept.

During World War II price supports were extended to cover a considerably larger number of commodities. Also the level of support was raised as an inducement to greater agricultural production. In some cases where price ceilings prevented prices of commodities from keeping pace with production costs, outright subsidies were paid.

The Agricultural Act of 1948 was an amendment of the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938. The purpose of this act was not only to stabilize agricultural returns during peace times but also to set a pattern for agriculture policy over a long period of time.

There has been considerable controversy on the type of price programs, on the level of price supports, and on the administrative control, but it appears that some form of subsidy is here to stay. Neither of the major political groups or any of the major agricultural pressure groups have ever mentioned the possibility of discontinuing the programs; rather they have only differed on the type of program desired.

The Farm Bureau, for instance, takes a firm stand in favor of flexible price supports. They believe that prices must be free to fluctuate in order to guide the allocation of resources in the balancing of production and consumption. They hold that since the present program does not allow the prices to fluctuate there can be no balancing of supply and demand and large surpluses tend to accumulate resulting in production controls. The Farm Bureau contends that these controls only tend to freeze production patterns which may prevent shifts in resources which would bring about more efficient production.

They advocate flexible controls, which allow prices to perform their normal function of helping guide production and consumption, as a method of providing farmers with a certain amount of insurance against sudden disastrous drops in farm price. The Farm Bureau doesn't approve of direct production payments because they say the farm people don't like the idea of getting a dole from the government. The strongest objection the Farm Bureau has, however, is the fear that direct government payments would lead to a completely government-managed agriculture in which farmers would be dependent on the government for their net income.[4]

The Grange takes a position on price support similar to that of the Farm Bureau. Their stand on the government policy as indicated in one of their information pamphlets states in part that;

"The Grange supports policies which tend to stabilize the economy against violent business cycle fluctuations."

"It has vigorously opposed the payments of government subsidies in liew of fair prices for farm products."

"The Grange has been a strong advocate of flexible price supports. It recognizes that high rigid support prices mean regimentation of producers, stopping of adjustment to economic change and intolerable costly surpluses."[5]

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[4]W. E. Hamilton, The Economic and Political Philosophy of Variable Price Support Advocates, A revised form of a paper prepared for a meeting of the Southern Economic Association, November 19 and 20, 1954, Merchandise Mart, Chicago, Illinois, p. 16.

[5]The Grange Blue Book, The National Grange, Washington D. C., p. 3.

The stand taken by the Farmers Union, however, has been considerably different from that of the Farm Bureau or the Grange. James G. Patton, national president of the Farmers Union, in presenting their stand on agriculture policy before the Senate Agriculture Committee led off by saying, "Full parity farm income is attainable in our time."[6] He then went on to present a detailed account of why and how such a program could be achieved. Expanding full employment is the foundation of their full parity farm income program, but even under full employment conditions they say an expanded demand for farm products is required in order to increase the inadequate market bargaining power of farms. Part of this additional demand would be achieved by increased federal financing of various food distribution programs.

Price supports at 100 per cent of parity for the farm production of all farm commodities would be achieved through the use of production payments in combination with marketing quotas for individual commodities. In this way supplies could be balanced with what the market and public would demand at 100 per cent parity.

There have been numerous and varied types of studies conducted to determine just where the farmer himself stands on the various kinds and phases of government agricultural programs. There have been broad sweeping studies covering all phases of the programs, and there have been other studies concerned with the attitudes and effects of the government programs on one individual commodity. Probably the most extensive project

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[6]Testimony before the Senate Agriculture Committee, June 7, 1954, as reported by the National Farmers Union Washington Newsletter, Volume 2, No. 23, June 10, 1955.

in determining farmers' attitudes and opinions toward agricultural programs was conducted by the United States Department of Agriculture in 1951 under the title of "Family Farm Policy Review." The object of this study was to conduct a comprehensive policy review of how well farm programs were serving family farmers and how these programs could be improved to better protect and preserve the traditional American pattern of family farming.[7] The review was conducted throughout the United States at county meetings.

In New York, a study was developed in conjunction with the Family Farm Policy Review. The survey leaders in New York questioned the value of county meetings because they felt the attendance would not represent a cross section of the farmers. With the objectives in mind of obtaining New York farmers' opinions on agricultural policies and programs and getting suggestions for changes and improvements in these programs, agricultural agents and teachers of vocational agriculture interviewed 1,500 farmers in the summer of 1951.[8] The study was restricted to those farmers who received one-half or more of their income from farming. Since the sample was to be for the state as a whole, proportionate units were selected at random from each county.

The study found that New York farmers were not very well informed on the various farm programs. The number, size and technical nature of the programs were listed as the main factors responsible for the farmers'

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[7]Family Farm Policy Review, United States Department of Agriculture, June 11, 1951, p. ix.

[8]Edward O. Moe, New York Farmers' Opinions on Agricultural Programs, New York State College of Agriculture at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, Cornell Extension Bulletin 864, November, 1952, pp. 56-57.

difficulty in understanding the programs. Most of the farmers desired a special information service which would keep them aware and informed on the various agencies and programs.

On the issue of price supports for agricultural products New York farmers were about evenly divided. Forty-five per cent believed prices should be supported, 46 per cent didn't like the idea of support, and 9 per cent didn't express an opinion. Younger farmers and those with less education, especially those who had never attended high school, were more likely to desire price supports. Approval for price supports was considerably less among poultry and livestock farmers (other than dairy) who favored supports by only 30 per cent, as compared to the average of 45 per cent. The dairy farmers favored the supports at the same rate as the average.[9]

A total of 669 farmers favored price supports. Of these farmers, over half desired a flexible support related to the supply of the commodities. The rest of the farmers were about evenly split between the categories of being undecided or being in favor of supports being fixed at a certain level of parity. Of those farmers desiring a fixed percentage of parity, 87.2 per cent favored a parity level of 90 per cent or more.[10]

After the farmers had discussed price supports, direct payments and export subsidies they were asked, "If we are going to keep farm income up, which do you think would be the best way to do it?" Only slightly over two-thirds of the farmers attempted to answer the question.

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[9]Ibid., pp. 33-34.

[10]Ibid., pp. 34-35.

Of those answering, more than one-third favored price supports and about one-third were undecided. About one-tenth favored direct payments and two out of ten favored the export subsidy idea.[11]

Moe found the New York farmers were opposed to the idea of production adjustments. Six out of 10 farmers stated that there should be no production control programs. It was found that farmers who did not favor price supports were much more opposed to production adjustments than those who approved price supports.[12]

In the summer of 1950, Michigan State College conducted a survey to determine the attitudes of Michigan farmers toward the government support program. A sample of 500 farmers were selected to be interviewed from seven different counties, representing different types of farming areas. In order to restrict the study to full-time commerical farmers, only those operators farming 70 acres or more of land were interviewed.[13]

The farmers were evenly divided as to whether price supports were needed in 1950. Farmers were rather inconsistent on this issue in that when answering a later question, two-thirds of the farmers indicated that there should be some floor under farm prices. Of those favoring supports, 46 per cent did so because they felt supports were needed to keep farm prices up and to place farmers on a par with other groups in the economy.

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[11] Ibid., pp. 37-38.

[12] Ibid., p. 38.

[13] Dale E. Hathaway, E. E. Peterson, and Lawrence Witt, Michigan Farmers and the Price Support Program. II. Farmers' Attitudes Toward the Support Program, Michigan State College Agricultural Experiment Station, East Lansing, Michigan, Technical Bulletin 235, December, 1952, p. 6.

Farmers who didn't think supports were needed were strong in the opinion that supply and demand would take care of their problems.[14]

Forty-one per cent of the farmers interviewed thought acreage allotments were needed in 1950, and yet three-fourths of the same farmers thought it was good business for the individual farmer to offset his acreage allotment if possible by improved production methods. It was further noted that such attitudes were not associated with attitudes toward acreage allotments or support prices.[15] On the question of freedom versus security in the government programs, only 27 per cent indicated they were willing to accept more production controls in order to achieve price security. Sixty-two per cent were unwilling to accept production controls in order to achieve more price security. After various questions on the diversion and direct payment type programs, the farmers were asked which method of supports they preferred for perishable products. Nearly one-fourth of the farmers had no preference, 10 per cent didn't want either method and the rest of the farmers were just about equally divided on their preferences for the two methods.[16]

Throughout the survey Hathaway and others found that the farmer was not well informed on the various phases of the government programs. For example, eight out of ten farmers didn't know or were wrong in their understanding of the relationship between support prices and parity, 70 per cent of the farmers interviewed had no understanding of what was

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[14] Ibid., pp. 10-13.

[15] Ibid., pp. 20-23.

[16] Ibid., p. 38.

meant by the term "marketing quota," and more than one-half of the farmers had never heard of direct payments.

The Michigan study further found that there was no association between the farmers' attitudes and knowledge of the government program and the following factors: age and farming experience of operator, farm ownership, indebtedness, size of farm, membership in farm organization, or years of formal education.[17]

A more recent study was conducted by Iowa State College to determine the views and opinions of farmers located throughout Iowa and the northern three-fifths of Illinois on the entire price support program.

The study consisted of sample surveys, of approximately the same size, taken in April, June and October 1953, and January 1954.[18] Thus it was possible to observe if the farmers' attitudes were subject to change in the period of a few months. Most of the checking on possible changes in attitudes was carried out on shifts in price support opinions.

According to the surveys there were substantial shifts in attitudes toward price supports between the first survey in April and the January survey taken ten months later. Only 44 per cent of the farmers favored supports on feed grains in April, but the next January this figure had increased to 68 per cent. Those opposing supports declined 19 per cent and in addition, fewer farmers were undecided in January 1954.[19] There

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[17]Ibid., pp. 3-4.

[18]Donald R. Kaldor, Views of Iowa and Northern Illinois Farmers on Price Support Policy, Iowa State Experiment Station, Iowa State College, Ames, Iowa, Preliminary Report No. 4, p. 1.

[19]Ibid., p. 2.

was also a considerable shift in favor of price supports for hogs. Even with the shift, there were still 55 per cent against controls.[20] The upswing in favor of price supports on cattle was somewhat greater in northern Illinois than in Iowa, which resulted in the percentages favoring cattle supports being about equal in the two states. The combined area report in January 1954 showed that 48 per cent of the farmers were in favor of support with an equal number opposed.[21]

In the April survey Kaldor found that when the farmers were asked to express an opinion on the question of flexible versus fixed support levels they were definitely in favor of the flexible controls. Seventy-three per cent favored the flexible controls, 20 per cent preferred fixed levels of support and there were 7 per cent who were undecided as to which they favored.[22] The July survey found that farmers were about evenly divided on the question of acreage controls. Forty-four per cent favored keeping their corn acreage free of controls and taking a cut in the support price, while 42 per cent preferred cutting their corn acreage and keeping a 90 per cent of parity price support level.[23]

In January after the corn acreage allotments had been announced for 1954, an attempt was made to determine how farmers would respond to acreage allotments in 1954. This survey found that participation in the

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[20] Ibid., p. 3.

[21] Ibid., p. 4

[22] Donald R. Kaldor, Views of Iowa and Northern Illinois Farmers on Price Support Policy, Iowa State College Agricultural Experiment Station, Ames, Iowa, Preliminary Report No. 1, p. 6.

[23] Ibid., p. 10.

program would be rather light. Only 40 per cent of the sample indicated they would participate or might participate in a program where there would be a 15 per cent reduction in corn acreages. If the acreage cut was 20 per cent, only 36 per cent stated they might participate in the program. Nearly one-half of those farmers who didn't plan to participate in the program stated they wouldn't comply because they fed all their corn.[24]

There have been numerous surveys which have been concerned with one commodity. Such a study was conducted in Pennsylvania to determine milk producers' knowledge and opinions of the state Milk Control Law. It was found that the producers were relatively uninformed. Although the fluid milk industry had been under state control for over twenty years, only slightly over half of the producers knew that a governmental agency established milk prices.[25] Of the informed group, nearly two-thirds believed that the control program had helped the industry and another third were undecided as to the effect of the program. Only 5 per cent believed that the control program had actually been harmful.[26] Of this same informed group, nearly three-fourths of the producers favored continuation of the state milk regulation.[27]

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[24]Donald R. Kaldor, Effect of Corn Acreage Allotments on Farmers' Production Plans in Iowa and Northern Illinois, Iowa State College, Agricultural Experiment Station, Ames, Iowa, Preliminary Report No. 3, March 1, 1954, pp. 2-3.

[25]W. T. Butz, C. W. Pierce, H. S. Preston, Producers Knowledge and Opinion of State Milk Control in Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania State College Agricultural Experiment Station, State College, Pennsylvania, Journal Series Paper No. 1796, April, 1953, p. 9.

[26]Ibid., p. 25.

[27]Ibid., p. 15.

The uninformed respondents (those producers who did not know that a governmental agency established milk prices) were asked if they would favor the establishment of a governmental agency to control milk prices. Only 29 per cent of these farmers favored the establishment of such an agency.[28] With the aid of statistical analysis the conclusion was reached that knowledge about milk control tends to make producers favorable to control. The study in addition, found that the producer's knowledge about milk control could be positively related to the respondent's years of formal education, size of farm business and absolute size of the dairy enterprise.[29]

The potato industry has been studied in great detail by single commodity surveys. In the spring of 1952 the agricultural experiment stations in the North Central Region made a study of various regions in the United States on the effect of the price support program on potatoes.

The first full scale price support program on potatoes was started in 1942. Until 1945 the government was concerned with increasing potato acreage to meet wartime requirements for potatoes. Thereafter there were just general maximum allotments until 1947 when specific farm allotments were established by using acreage patterns developed during the war time period. This program lasted until 1950 when all price supports and acreage allotments were discontinued.

One of the major conclusions reached in this study was that price stability and not price level was responsible for the tremendous increases

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[28] Ibid., p. 15.

[29] Ibid., pp. 29-31.

in potato acreages.[30] Support prices for potatoes were not high relative to other farm prices nor relative to their historical relationship to parity, but the price support program reduced fluctuation of prices which historically had varied over a wide range. The study further found that attitudes toward the price support program varied considerably between regions where potato production is the main crop and regions where good alternatives were available. The majority of farmers who depended on potatoes as their principal source of income thought the government price support program had been a good thing for them and that the program resulted in higher income from potatoes. The majority of those farmers who used potatoes as a supplementary cash crop did not think the program was good for them and that as a result of the program they had lower incomes from potatoes. When the potato farmers were asked if they would prefer a direct payment plan instead of price supports both groups indicated a preference for price supports. They also indicated that if prices are to be supported in periods of low prices, some type of restrictions will be necessary. They preferred, however, a weaker type of control such as acreage allotments rather than more stringent controls such as grade restrictions or marketing quotas.[31]

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[30]Roger W. Gray, Vernon L. Sorenson, and Willard W. Cochrane, An Economic Analysis of the Impact of Government Programs in the Potato Industry of the United States, University of Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station, Minneapolis, Minnesota, Technical Bulletin 234 and North Central Regional Publication No. 42, June, 1954, pp. 72-73.

[31]Roger W. Gray, Vernon L. Sorenson, and Willard W. Cochrane, Price Supports and the Potato Industry, University of Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station, Minneapolis, Minnesota, Technical Bulletin 234 and North Central Region Publication No. 43, January, 1954, pp. 23-24.

In conjunction with the North Central Regional Study, Michigan State College conducted a study of the effect of the federal potato programs. For the Michigan study an additional questionnaire was added and the size of the sample was increased to get a representative sample of the Michigan potato producers. This study found substantially the same results as the larger North Central Regional Study. Here again it was found that price certainty was one of the most important aspects of the price program. Of those producers who liked the support program, 54 per cent of the farmers thought it was a good thing because it assured farmers a guaranteed price. Only 18 per cent liked the program because it raised prices to farmers.[32] It was further found that there were no relationships between the use of supports and such things as the age and farming experience of the farmer, size of farm, investment in potato producing equipment, production practices or membership in farm organizations.[33] It was found, however, that as the distance from the terminal market increased, the producers indicated a greater approval of the program.[34]

It is interesting to note that the National Potato Council turned its attention to reducing price uncertainty by cutting the wide range of price fluctuations in the potato industry. Mr. William M. Case, director of the National Potato Council, in testimony given during the hearings

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[32]Dale E. Hathaway and A. Dewey Bond, Michigan Potato Producers and Price Support Programs, Michigan State College Agricultural Experiment Station, East Lansing, Michigan, Bulletin 241, June, 1954, p. 19.

[33]Ibid., p. 5.

[34]Ibid., p. 24.

before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, requested an increase in the appropriations for the crop and livestock estimates work.[35]

He went on to testify that in the last three or four years the potato industry had attempted to handle its own problems. In order to keep production in line with demand, there needed to be more accurate and extensive research done on the crop reports. If the industry is to do a better job of planning production, monthly data must be available on the amount of potatoes being harvested and marketed. This data would be in addition to the total production information now available.[36]

It may be that studies which cover the effects of a price support program on only one commodity can be extremely useful. Information may be obtained in this type of study which might otherwise be lost in studies covering attitudes and effects of entire price support and production control programs. The type of study as conducted on potatoes cannot be used exclusively, however, because it fails to provide answers as to what effects the program on one commodity will have on other crops that are grown on the farm.

The results of all the surveys were somewhat similar regarding the opinions of farmers toward the various government programs. One of the most striking similarities is the lack of knowledge and understanding on the part of the farmers about the programs which are now a part of their

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[35]"Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, United States Senate, Eighty-fourth Congress, First Session," Agricultural Appropriations for 1954, United States Government Printing Office, Washington D. C.

[36]Ibid., p. 561.

everyday life. In addition, there appear to be certain inconsistencies in the farmers' attitudes toward the government programs. Thus far, the farmers' knowledge and opinions have been gained and formed through the experience of participation in what he believes to be a desirable or undesirable program. If farmers are to become familiar with the different types of programs and the various alternatives, our political system and the field of agricultural extension are facing a tremendous challenge.

CHAPTER III

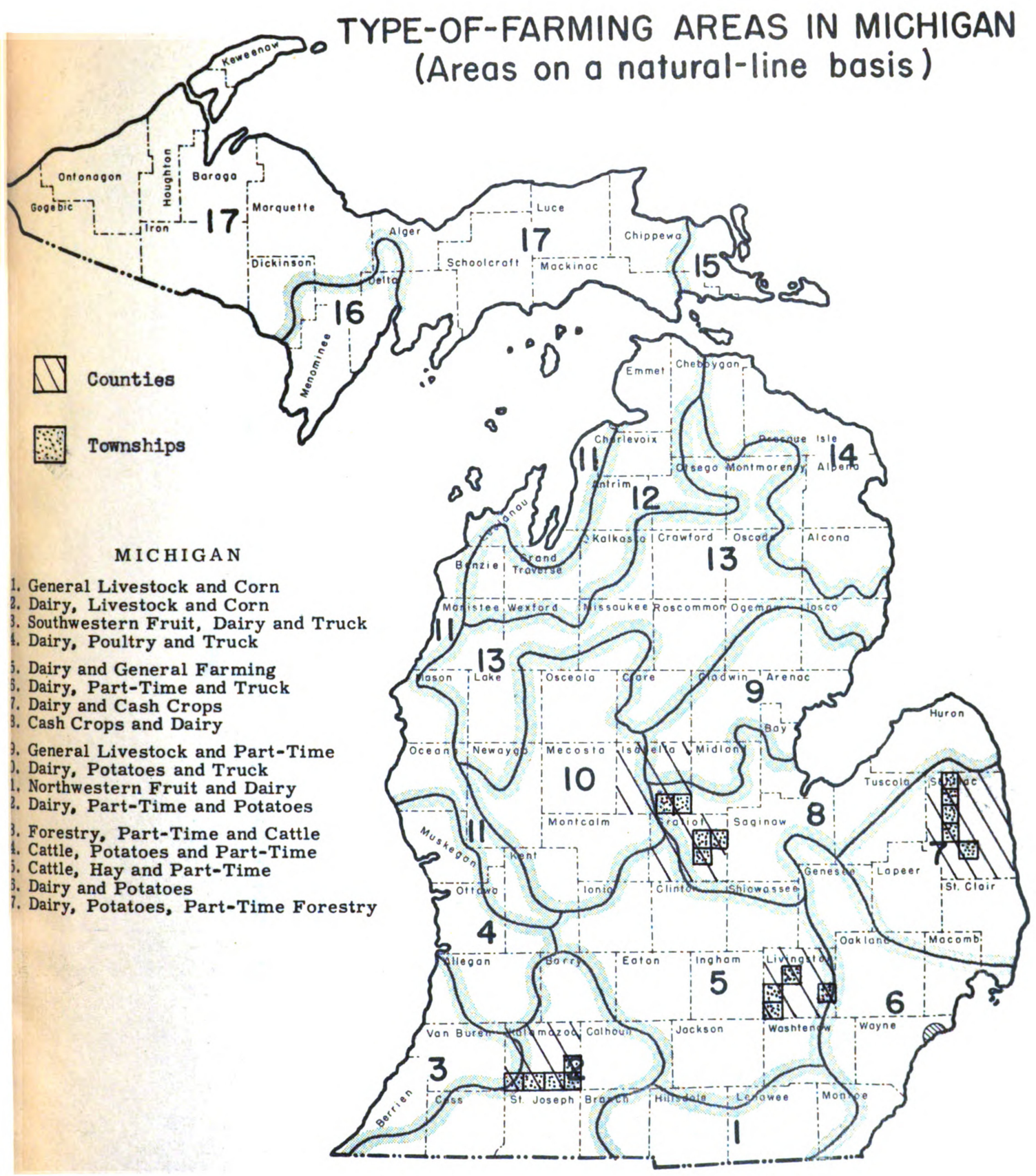
PROCEDURE AND METHODS

Selection of Areas Studied

The selection of the sample areas was based upon representation of various important commercial farming areas of Michigan. The samples, in addition, represented areas where managerial decisions involved different kinds of alternatives as the result of the production controls. A further consideration in selection was obtaining a large enough sample to insure reliability of the final results.

The sample counties chosen were Kalamazoo, Livingston, Sanilac, and Gratiot-Isabella (Gratiot and Isabella counties were considered as one sample area) which represented type-of-farming areas 2, 5, 7, and 8 respectively, as shown on Figure I. These counties represented heavy commercial agriculture areas where the production control programs had the fullest impact. When the wheat acreage was cut, many managerial decisions were necessary. In some areas there tended to be a natural crop or enterprise to which to shift the production capacities; in other areas the decisions on diverted acres were more difficult. The areas were so located with respect to markets, climate, soil types and off-the-farm job opportunities that the resultant managerial decisions would not end in a shift to any one particular crop or enterprise.

The acres of major crops grown and the number of livestock shown in Table 1 give an over-all picture of the production within the counties used in this study.



The 83 counties in Michigan are here grouped into 17 type-of-farming areas as indicated in this map. The "natural" boundaries of these areas do not, however, follow county boundaries, but lines representing the influences of soil, climate and markets.

Figure I. Location of Counties and Townships Used as Sample Areas

TABLE 1

FIELD CROP ACREAGE AND LIVESTOCK NUMBERS IN INDICATED COUNTIES*

	Thousands of Acres							Thousands of Animals				
County	Corn	Winter wheat	Oats	Dry beans	Sugar beets	Barley	Hay	All cattle	Cows for milk	Sheep	Sows farrowed	Chickens
Gratiot	58.6	30	34	37.0	3.68	2.5	32	37	16.5	7.1	6.4	176.6
Isabella	37.6	18	30	9.5	.83	2.6	43	45	19.5	2.7	4.6	186.1
Sanilac	41.8	51	73	34.5	4.90	2.0	95	88	45.0	3.9	1.0	319.5
Kalamazoo	41.9	23	26	.1	--	2.0	30	25	10.5	7.4	4.2	140.0
Livingston	33.9	18	23	.8	.02	1.5	36	31	15.0	17.4	2.1	116.0

*Michigan Department of Agriculture, Michigan Agricultural Statistics 1954, June, 1955, pp. 19-25.

Kalamazoo county was chosen to represent an area which was a small grain and livestock area. The alternatives to wheat in this county were beef cattle, hogs and corn rather than dairy. This was pointed up by a trend indicated in the comparison of the county estimates from the 1951 and 1954 Michigan Agricultural Statistics. Dairy numbers decreased from 11,000 to 10,500. Cattle numbers on the other hand, increased from 23,300 to 25,000. Wheat acreage dropped 9,000 acres, but the corn acreage increased 7,900 acres. Other field crop acreages were increasing, but at a much slower rate.

Livingston County was chosen to represent an area of heavy dairy with wheat as a side line in the general farming area. According to the county estimates in the Michigan Agricultural Statistics 1954, there were 15,000 cows for milk and 18,000 acres of winter wheat. One of the important alternatives in Livingston county was working part time off the farm. The importance of this alternative showed up very clearly in the sample where only 59 per cent of the farmers were getting 100 per cent of their total income from farming.

An area of intensive dairy operation and cash farming was represented by Sanilac County. According to the Michigan Agricultural Statistics 1954, Sanilac county had 45,000 cows for milk and yet it had 41,800 acres of corn and 51,000 acres of winter wheat. This intensity was further exemplified by the data from the sample taken in Sanilac county. In a sample of 100 farms, 64 per cent were intensive dairy farms. An intensive dairy farm was defined as a farm where over 50 per cent of the livestock was dairy and where there were less than ten acres of land per cow. The sample further showed that of the remaining farms, 14 per cent had no livestock at all, and thus were strictly cash farms.

Two counties, Gratiot and Isabella, were selected to represent an area where the emphasis was on cash crops with dairy in a secondary position. They were selected because the sample areas within the counties fit the average for land use and type-of-farming. The area represented by the two counties was farther away from the influence of industrial areas than any other of the sample counties and thus off-the-farm jobs were not an important alternative in managerial decisions. The sample taken from this area indicates 76 per cent of the farmers received 100 per cent of their total income from farming and further that 91 per cent of the farmers received 80 per cent or more of their total income from farming.

From the above five counties, 19 townships were selected for concentrated study. These townships are indicated on Figure I. The townships within the counties were selected from soil association maps in an attempt to get approximately uniform soil types within each of the areas. It was necessary to use townships in both Gratiot and Isabella to reach this goal.

Further stipulations on the selection of the townships were: (1) no township which was used in a similar survey in 1952 could be used again, and (2) no township where the township county agent program study was being carried out or which was being used as a test area in that program could be used in this study. These restrictions were imposed in order to avoid possible dual enumeration and possible poor reception.

Selection of the Sample

In order to stay within the objective of including only commercial farms, only those farms having a wheat allotment of 15 acres or more were

included in the sample. As a result, the farmers interviewed had farms larger than the average. However, since 80 per cent of the wheat produced in Michigan was grown on farms raising 15 acres or more of wheat, they were typical of commercial farms. In addition, it was on farms having more than 15 acres of wheat where adjustments would have to be made because of the production controls.

The four hundred schedules to be taken were divided among four counties, and then further divided among the townships. There were five townships in each of the counties with the exception of Livingston where only four townships were used.

The sample farm operators to be interviewed in each township were selected from the wheat listing sheets of the County Agriculture Stabilization and Conservation Committee. Each county office maintained a list of all the owners of tracts of land of ten acres or more in size. These tracts were arranged by township, with the tracts in approximately alphabetical order by the owner's name.

Using a table of random numbers, approximately twice the number of required farms having an allotment of 15 acres or more of wheat were selected. This larger than necessary selection was made in order to provide the interviewers with enough names to get the required sample in the event of refusals, not-at-homes, or incorrest names and addresses.

At the time the farm was selected, the name and address of the owner was recorded along with historical farm data. The interviewers used these facts in locating the farms to be used in the sample.

The Questionnaire

Excerpts of the questionnaire which were used in this study are included in Appendix A. The entire questionnaire was seventeen pages long. In this study only those parts of the questionnaire dealing with characteristics of the farm and the farmer, and the farmer's attitudes toward the government programs were used. Page 1 of the questionnaire was used to record the number of calls and the length of time required to complete the interview. The interviewers were instructed, if there was a "not-at-home" on the first call, to make two more calls on different days at different times before abandoning attempts to establish contact.

The interviewers were furnished with instruction on interviewing procedures for this particular survey. In addition, they were furnished with general instructions for interviewers. These instructions were all pointed at reducing the refusal rate to an absolute minimum, getting complete unbiased information, and finally, creating a favorable impression of the survey and Michigan State College.

In order to be able to sort the various responses into groups, it was necessary to get information about the farmer and his farm. To obtain characteristics of the farmer, information was secured about the respondent's age, farming experience, ownership or tenure status, farm organization membership, attendance of meetings held by county agricultural agent, and per cent of total income gained from farming. Characteristics of the farm were secured from information on the total acres, total tillable acres, type of farming and intensity of livestock program. For the most part, these questions were pre-coded and the interviewer had only to check the appropriate answer.

To obtain the farmer's attitudes toward the government programs, the questions were left open-ended and the interviewer recorded the answer as nearly as possible in the words used by the respondent. This was done in order to get the farmer to express his ideas without the danger of getting a bias from categorized answers.

In order to make full use of these answers, however, it was necessary to limit the number by categorizing them. The response for each of the questions was studied and then categories were set up which would most nearly include the majority of answers given by the farmers. The next step was that of going through the questionnaires and placing the answers in the appropriate category. The last step was then checked for any error or possible bias in placing the answers in the category. Finally the answers were coded so that they could be punched on IBM cards for machine tabulation.

CHAPTER IV

ATTITUDES TOWARD THE GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FARM AND FARMER

In this chapter the farmers' attitudes toward various phases of government programs will be presented along with an analysis of the relationships between these attitudes and the characteristics of the farmer and the farm. The farmer's characteristics considered as possibly influencing his attitudes were: farming experience, age, tenure status, per cent of income from farming, farm organization membership, and attendance at meetings held by the county agricultural agent. The farm characteristics considered were: total acreage, total tillable acreage, type of farm, and intensity of livestock program.

In order to establish a type of farm it was necessary to put the various kinds of livestock on a common basis. This was done by converting the livestock into animal units. The breakdown of the different kinds of livestock into animal units and how the units were derived is shown in Appendix B.

If a farm had more than five animal units with 50 per cent or more of the units of the same type, a specific type of livestock farm was established. A general farm category was established for those farms where no one category reached 50 per cent. These farms were then further broken down into intensity of livestock operations. Those farms having less than ten acres of land per animal unit constituted a farm of intensive livestock operations. A farm with more than ten acres of land per

animal unit was said to have an extensive livestock program. The breakdown of all characteristic groups and their composition in the sample is shown in Appendix C. In the statistical analysis, each of the characteristic groups were used as the independent variable with the responses used as dependent variables.

Farmers' Reactions on the Possibility of Continued Acreage Allotments

Over 90 per cent of the farmers interviewed indicated that they had thought about the continuation of acreage allotments. When asked how they felt about the possibility of having allotments over a period of years, nearly one-third of the responses could be categorized as, "Probably continue to have allotments." (Table 2) Another 12.8 per cent believed allotments would be continued as long as there were surpluses, or unless there was a war or drought. A war or drought in this case would be just a way of doing away with surpluses. Slightly over 20 per cent of the farmers said they didn't like allotments, but about half of them believed the allotments would be continued. Very few of the farmers believed controls would be discontinued. Some of these farmers thought it might take four or five years before it happened. Most farmers, however, gave no indication of how quickly or for what reason the allotment portion of the government program would be abandoned. Most farmers seemed to take a continued allotment program for granted, at least when the program was considered in general terms.

There were no apparent relationships between any of the farm or farmer characteristics and the responses given by the sample farmers.

TABLE 2

REACTION OF FARMERS TOWARD THE POSSIBILITY OF CONTINUED CONTROLS

Response	Per Cent
Probably continue to have acreage allotments	30.4
Probably continue to have acreage allotments unless there is a war or drought	3.9
Probably continue to have acreage allotments as long as there are surpluses	8.9
Probably continue to have acreage allotments and believe they are desirable	4.1
Believe acreage controls should be continued	1.5
The allotment program is all right but there should be some changes	3.1
Probably continue to have allotments but do not like or desire them	11.1
Do not like or want allotments	10.2
Acreage allotments are on their way out	5.8
Other	5.3
Don't know	6.8
Haven't given any thought about continued acreage controls	8.9
Total	100.0
Number of respondents 414	

In order to determine the reaction of the farmer toward allotments when they were applied specifically to his own farm, the following questions were asked:

"What effect do you think the allotments will have on your farming operations if they continue for a period of time? What changes, if any, do you plan to make in your present farm organization if the acreage allotments are continued?"

The answers for the two questions fell into the same categories but there was a different apportionment of the answers. (Table 3) Twenty-one per cent of the farmers thought allotments would have no effect on their farming operations. Another 16 per cent said they would change their cropping system, which probably meant that they planned to follow allotments. Thirteen per cent said their income would be reduced, and another 10 per cent thought the allotments would put them out of business. Other farmers hesitated to say what the effects would be until they knew the exact nature of the programs.

In studying the relationships between the characteristics of the farmer and his farm there was an indication that continued acreage controls would have less effect on the intensive dairy farmers than on cash crop farmers. There was not a similar indication between the other type of farms and the cash crop farmers. The intensive dairy farmers probably felt that they already had a lot of land in pasture and hay. Moreover, they needed most of the remaining feed crop acreages and since they didn't sell anything off the farm they would not use any of the program benefits; thus they would not comply with allotments. Farmers with less than 140 acres of crop land were a little more likely to think that allotments would have little or no effect on their farm operations than were the larger farmers. Many of these smaller farmers didn't think

TABLE 3

EFFECTS THAT FARMERS BELIEVE CONTINUED ALLOTMENTS WILL HAVE ON FARMING OPERATIONS AND ORGANIZATION

Effects	Operations	Organization
	Per Cent	
No change or little effect	21.0	29.7
Will change cropping system	15.9	17.9
Will have less income	13.0	.5
Be forced out of farming	10.0	2.9
Will change livestock programs	6.0	15.2
Depends on future programs	4.6	2.7
Strive to increase yields and production capacities	2.2	5.3
Farm according to allotments	1.9	3.4
Won't follow allotments	1.4	.5
Other	11.4	3.6
Don't know	12.6	17.6
Total	100.0	100.0
Number of respondents 414		

they would receive a serious cut in acreage and therefore the program would not affect them as far as farm operation was concerned. This would be particularly true if their wheat acreage were 15 acres or less.

There was also a slight indication that farmers who were in a renting status were more likely to think the allotments would cause a reduction in income than were farm owners. Part of this difference might have been due to the renter's uncertainty as to what the landlord would do about acreage allotments.

When the farmers considered how allotments might affect their farm organization, almost three out of ten thought there would be few or no changes needed. About 18 per cent said they would change their cropping system and another 15 per cent were going to change their livestock program. Other farmers didn't know what effects the allotments would have or else they wanted to wait and see what the future programs would be like. Slightly over 5 per cent of the farmers volunteered that they would try to increase crop yields and other productive capacities.

In considering changes to farm organization, those farmers with less than 180 acres of crop land were more likely to believe that allotments would have little or no effect than those farmers having larger acres of tillable land.[37] Farmers over 56 years of age were also less likely to make changes because of allotments than other farmers.[38] (Table 4) There was more of a tendency for farmers who attended county agent meetings to say they would strive to increase yields and productive

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[37]Significant at the 1 per cent level of chi square.

[38]Significant at the 2 per cent level of chi square.

TABLE 4

RESPONSE TO ACREAGE ALLOTMENTS AS RELATED TO AGE

Response	Under 56	Over 56
	Per Cent	
Few or no changes	26	39
Other answers	74	61
Total	100	100
Number of respondents	305	109

capacities than those who attended no meetings. By the very attendance at these meetings, farmers were gaining knowledge and new technology which would enable them to increase production. It may be that when they were faced with controls they were more apt to put the new knowledge into use.

Farmers' Attitudes Toward Marketing Quotas and the Penalty Enforcement

Marketing quotas were in effect a form of acreage allotments, but the impact of each was quite different. Acreage allotments could be ignored by farmers with the only consequence being the lack of eligibility for price supports. The market quotas were accompanied by a penalty stipulation such that producers who exceeded their allotments were subject to a heavy fine. Farmers who may have been rather indifferent to acreage allotments because they could comply or not as they saw fit, were more likely to think twice when faced with a penalty on excess acreage. Also, the level of price support was an important factor when the

farmer considered voting on marketing quotas. If the farmer felt that the support levels were high enough to make up for acreage cuts, he might have been willing to accept the quotas.

Voting and attitudes on marketing quotas. In spite of the possible effect of marketing quotas on the farmer, only four out of ten farmers took part in the wheat marketing quota vote in 1953 and 1954. Approximately one out of ten farmers interviewed was ineligible to vote because his wheat acreage had been cut to 15 acres. About one-fourth of the interviews in this study were taken before the wheat vote and the rest were completed after the vote. Among those farmers interviewed before the vote there was a certain amount of indecision not only as to whether they would vote, but also as to how they would vote.

Although approximately the same number of farmers voted in the two years, there was a considerable shift in the way the farmers voted. In 1953, of the farmers voting, 61 per cent voted for quotas, 34 per cent voted against quotas, and the remaining 5 per cent didn't remember how they voted or else they didn't answer the question. In contrast to this favorable vote for quotas, in the 1954 vote only 40 per cent of the farmers were for quotas, 45 per cent voted against quotas, and 15 per cent didn't know how they had voted, or if they had not yet voted, how they would vote.

It is possible that the total vote could have been in favor of quotas if all the undecided farmers had voted for controls. Even if this entire group voted for quotas, the margin in favor of marketing restrictions of the previous year still would have been cut considerably.

The state vote from which this sample was drawn shows the same trends as the sample. In 1953 the state vote was more decidedly in favor of controls than the sample vote, and in 1954 the sample vote was practically the same as the state vote. The sample could not be expected to represent the universe from which it was taken because the areas used in the survey were not picked at random. A comparison of the votes in the two year period is shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5

THE SAMPLE VOTE COMPARED TO THE STATE VOTE ON THE WHEAT QUOTAS IN 1953 AND 1954

How the Farmers Voted on Wheat Quotas	1953		1954	
	Sample	State	Sample	State
		Per Cent		
Yes	64	73	47	45
No	36	27	53	55
Total	100	100	100	100
Number of respondents	157	11,174	141	8,305

It was interesting to note that the switch in the vote from 1953 to 1954 was not caused by farmers voting differently in the two year period. Rather, the change was due to different farmers voting in 1954 than had participated in the 1953 vote. Of the 101 farmers who voted for restrictions in 1953, only 68 took part in the 1954 balloting. Fifty-four of these farmers again voted yes, nine farmers were undecided, and only five farmers changed their vote to no. Fifty-six farmers voted against quotas in 1953, and 49 of these farmers again voted in 1954. All but six

were still against quotas. The large drop in votes for quotas resulted because only 67 per cent of those who voted for restrictions in 1953 took part in the 1954 balloting. On the other hand, 87 per cent of those farmers who voted no in 1953 again voted in 1954. It would seem that the farmers who were against marketing quotas were firm in their attitudes and their disapproval. Those farmers who favored marketing quotas were not so definite in their opinions. They were somewhat on the borderline and did not express their desires when the time came to vote.

Only 45 farmers who stayed away from the polls in 1953 took part in the 1954 balloting. Of these farmers, 27 were against restrictions, 6 were in favor of the restrictions and the rest did not disclose how they had voted, or if they hadn't yet voted, how they would vote.

In trying to account for the various shifts in voting, nothing of significance was found. The sample of those farmers who actually changed their vote between the 1953 and the 1954 balloting was too small to be useful in determining the type of farmer who changed his vote. There were no predominant characteristics among those farmers who voted in 1953 and failed to vote in 1954 or among those farmers who didn't vote in 1953 but did vote in 1954. The farmers who changed their attitudes did so independently of any particular farm or farmer characteristic. When the farm and farmer characteristics were related to those farmers who took part in the 1954 wheat balloting, certain relationships were noted. It was found that those farmers who attended meetings conducted by the county agent were more likely to take part in the voting than those farmers who never attended the meetings.[39] In comparison, there was very little

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[39]Significant at the 1 per cent level of chi square.

difference between farmers who belonged to a farm organization and those who didn't belong. Table 6 shows the number of farmers who voted or didn't vote that were in these characteristic categories.

TABLE 6

VOTING STATUS OF FARMERS IN 1954 AS RELATED TO ATTENDANCE AT COUNTY AGENT MEETINGS OR MEMBERSHIP IN A FARM ORGANIZATION

Voting Status in 1954	Attended County Agent Meetings	Did not Attend any Meetings	Belonged to a Farm Organization	Did not Belong to a Farm Organization
		Per Cent		
Voted	60	33	43	41
Did not vote	40	67	57	59
Total	100	100	100	100
Number of respondents	107	152	186	146

A greater percentage of farmers belonged to a farm organization than attended county agent meetings; thus the farm organizations were able to reach a greater number of farmers. Part of the reason why the farm organizations may not have been an influencing factor in this case could have been that some of their members used only the social aspects or cooperative parts of the organization's program. Those farmers who attended county agent meetings were not held together by any type of organization, and thus those who attended the various meetings may have tended to be those who were more active and aggressive in their farm operations. Attendance at these meetings, however, had no influence on the way the farmer voted. Fifty-three per cent of those farmers who attended meetings

voted against quotas and 52 per cent of the farmers who never attended any of the meetings voted against quotas. Farmers who belonged to a farm organization were slightly more opposed to quotas than those farmers who didn't belong to any farm organization.

An important relationship existed between the farm size and the voting status in 1954. Only 9 per cent of the farmers who operated up to 99 acres of land voted. As the farm size increased, the percentage of farmers voting also increased. Fifty-seven per cent of those farmers operating over 300 acres took part in the balloting.[40] The quota vote in relation to farm size is shown in Table 7.

TABLE 7

FARMERS' PARTICIPATION IN THE 1954 QUOTA VOTE AS RELATED TO FARM SIZE IN ACRES

Voting Status in 1954	Acres						
	0-99	100-139	140-179	180-219	220-259	260-299	300-
	Per Cent						
Voted	19	38	34	40	43	50	57
Did not vote	81	62	66	60	57	50	43
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number of respondents	34	39	56	50	44	24	75

Farm size was related to the farmers' attendance at meetings held by the county agent to see if the two characteristics might have any

[40]The difference between the farms under 100 acres and the farms over 100 acres was significant at the 1 per cent level of chi square.

possible influence on each other. It was found that over twice as many farmers on farms having over 100 acres of tillable land attended the meetings as those farmers operating less than 100 acres of cropland. It would appear that both of the characteristics were working in the same direction in influencing the farmer to vote, which would account for the significant differences within the two characteristic groups.

The size of the farm, however, had no consistent influence on the way the farmer voted. The larger farmers may have realized that the quotas were going to have a considerable effect on their operations so they took an active part in the voting procedure. There apparently was a considerable difference of opinion as to whether the quotas would benefit or hinder their large scale farm operations.

Farming experience was the only other characteristic that appeared to have a relationship with the way the farmer felt toward marketing quotas. As can be seen in Table 8, farmers with over twenty years of experience were more favorable toward quotas. Farmers with less than five years of farming experience were evenly divided on their vote and the farmers with five to twenty years of experience were against quotas.[41]

The difference in the vote of those farmers with less than five years and those with five to twenty years of experience possibly could be explained in terms of certainty of prices. The farmer just getting started in farming might have been more willing to accept quotas in order to get a guaranteed price for his wheat, thus insuring himself of a certain income. The more experienced farmer might have developed a certain pattern

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[41]The difference between those farmers with over twenty years of farming experience and those with less than twenty years of farming experience was significant at the 2 per cent level of chi square.

TABLE 8

FARMERS' VOTE IN 1954 AS RELATED TO FARM EXPERIENCE IN YEARS

How Farmers Voted on Wheat Quotas	Years of Experience				
	0-5	5-10	11-15	16-20	20-
	Per Cent				
Voted yes	50	44	22	33	59
Voted no	50	56	78	67	41
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Number of respondents	10	25	18	24	64

of farming and having been prosperous in the past, did not want to change his farming operations to conform to the acreage allotments.

It was a little more difficult to see why the farmer with over twenty years of experience was in favor of quotas, especially when the farmers over 56 years of age were evenly divided on their vote. A possible explanation might have been that the people who went through the depression in the 1930's as farmers and had experience with the government programs at that time tended to be more favorable toward these restrictions on production.

The 1954 vote on marketing quotas was broken down on a county basis in order to determine if the type of farming area had any influence on the way the farmers voted. That is to say, if an area was predominately livestock, would the cash crop farmers be influenced by the opinions and attitudes of the livestock operators? Table 9 shows that the vote in the four areas was almost identical. Over twice as many farmers voted in Kalamazoo and Gratiot-Isabella counties as voted in Sanilac county.

TABLE 9

HOW THE FARMERS IN THE SAMPLE COUNTIES VOTED ON WHEAT MARKETING QUOTAS IN 1954

Vote	Kalamazoo	Gratiot-Isabella	Sanilac	Livingston
		Per Cent		
Yes	48	47	48	46
No	52	53	52	54
Total	100	100	100	100
Number of respondents	44	43	21	33

Part of this difference between Kalamazoo and Sanilac counties might be explained by the fact that 46 per cent of the farmers interviewed in Kalamazoo county attended the county agent meetings and only 27 per cent of the farmers in Sanilac county attended meetings conducted by the county agent. Such differences, however, did not exist between Sanilac and the other two counties. Another possible reason for the different number of farmers voting would be the activity and strength of the local Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Committees. There was no data taken on the survey which would enable a measurement of this influence.

Attitudes toward penalty provisions. In order to be sure the farmers knew what the penalty was on excess wheat acreage, the following statement was read to them:

"This year, for the first time in more than ten years, we have marketing quotas on the wheat crop. According to the law, all farmers who produce more than 15 acres of wheat must comply with their acreage allotments, or pay cash penalties of about $1.12 per bushel on each bushel produced on all of the acreage over their allotments."

They were then asked the following two questions:

"(1) If wheat is sold, do you believe the government will enforce the penalty of $1.12 per bushel on the farmers who exceed their allotments? (2) If all of the wheat is fed on the farm, do you believe the government will enforce the penalty on farmers who exceeded their wheat acreage allotments?"

The results of these questions are tabulated in Table 10.

TABLE 10

FARMERS' OPINIONS ON THE WHEAT PENALTY ENFORCEMENT IN TERMS OF WHEAT USE

Penalty Enforcement	Wheat for Market	Wheat for Feed
	Per Cent	
Will be enforced	70	36
Will not be enforced	13	37
Undecided	17	27
Total	100	100
Number of respondents	414	414

The majority of the farmers thought the penalty would be enforced on wheat sold on the market, but they tended to think that it would not be enforced on wheat grown for feed. Also, nearly twice as many farmers were undecided whether the penalty would be enforced on wheat fed than were undecided as to enforcement of the penalty on wheat sold.

Of those farmers believing the penalty would be enforced on wheat sold in the market, 26 per cent gave as a reason that the penalty had been enforced before or was currently being enforced, another 35 per cent reasoned that as part of a law it would probably be enforced or that the

government said it would enforce the penalty, and 14 per cent of the farmers believed the penalty had to be enforced if the price support program was to work.

The farmers who thought the penalty would be enforced on wheat fed on the farms were rather indecisive as to why they believed as they did. The reason given most frequently (22 per cent of the total) was, "The government says it will enforce the penalty."

Approximately half of the farmers thought the penalty would not be enforced on either wheat sold or wheat fed because they believed it would be impossible to enforce such a law.

With one exception, there were no apparent relationships between the characteristics of the farm or farmer and his attitudes toward the penalty enforcement law. The one exception was an association between the farm operator's experience and his opinion on the penalty enforcement on wheat fed on the farm. Table 11 shows how farmers with different years of experience felt toward the penalty.

There was a significant difference between farmers with five to twenty years of experience and those with either more or less experience.[42] Six out of ten farmers with five to twenty years of experience didn't believe the penalty would be enforced. The situation was just about reversed with the other two groups. Here again the farmers with over twenty years of experience probably remembered the strict enforcement of controls in the 1930's and knew the law could be enforced. Perhaps the farmers with less experience just were not willing to take a chance on getting fined.

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[42]Significant at the 1 per cent level of chi square.

TABLE 11

FARMERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD THE PENALTY ENFORCEMENT OF WHEAT FED ON THE FARM AS RELATED TO YEARS OF FARMING EXPERIENCE

Penalty Enforced	Years of Farming Experience		
	0-5	5-20	20-
	Per Cent		
Will be enforced	62	40	57
Will not be enforced	38	60	43
Total	100	100	100
Number of respondents	29	148	122

Although of less significance, the age groups somewhat corresponded to the relationships found between years of farming experience and opinions on penalty enforcement. Farmers in the age group from 25 to 35 did not believe that the penalty would be enforced, whereas both the younger and older farmers tended to believe the penalty would be enforced.

Attitudes Toward Complying with Individual Crop and Total Farm Allotments

After an explanation of the allotment program for 1954,[43] the farmers were asked two questions:

"(1) Will you comply with acreage allotments on the individual crops? (2) Will you comply with a total acreage allotment on your farm if you receive one?"

On the question of complying with allotments on individual crops the farmers were about evenly divided. Forty-six per cent of the farmers

[43]For exact wording of explanation see question 37, Appendix A.

indicated they would comply with allotments, 41 per cent said they would not follow allotments, and 13 per cent of the farmers had not decided what they would do.

In comparing the characteristic groups with the farmers' attitudes toward compliance, several relationships were noted. As can be seen in Table 12 the majority of the intensive livestock farmers indicated that they would not follow the allotments whereas the majority of the other farmers said they would follow their allotments.

TABLE 12

FARMERS' EXPECTED COMPLIANCE WITH ACREAGE ALLOTMENTS AS RELATED TO TYPE OF FARM

Reaction to Controls	Intensive Livestock	Extensive Livestock	Less than 5 Units	No Livestock
			Per Cent	
Will comply	46	57	61	62
Will not comply	54	43	39	38
Total	100	100	100	100
Number of respondents	190	70	22	69

There was not enough difference between the extensive farmers, farmers with some livestock but less than 5 units, and the farmers with no livestock to be of any important significance. When the responses of these last three groups were compared as a unit against the responses of the intensive livestock farmers, there was a significant difference.[44]

[44]Significant at the 2 per cent level of chi square.

The farm size in tillable acres also appeared to have a relationship with the farmer's compliance on the acreage controls. Table 13 shows that farmers operating farms having from 140-219 tillable acres were less likely to comply with allotments than those farmers having a smaller or larger number of tillable acres in their farm. Statistically the difference between the smaller and middle sized farms was of little significance.

TABLE 13

FARMERS' ATTITUDES ON COMPLIANCE WITH ACREAGE ALLOTMENTS AS RELATED TO ACRES IN CROPLAND

Reaction to Controls	Acres		
	0-139	140-219	220-
		Per Cent	
Will comply	52	44	63
Will not comply	48	56	37
Total	100	100	100
Number of respondents	149	120	93

Over 60 per cent of the farmers having 220 acres or more of tillable land were willing to follow acreage allotments. There was a significant difference between the farmers having 140-219 acres of cropland and those having more than 220 acres of cropland in that the latter farmers were much more willing to follow their allotments.[45] The farmers having larger farms probably followed the allotments in order to qualify for price supports. Their larger volume of sales even when multiplied by a small

[45]Significant at the 1 per cent level of chi square.

difference between support prices and open market prices meant a considerable difference in income. The farmer with 140-219 acres of farm land could have afforded to be a little more independent. His volume of sales was not as large and a small price differential wouldn't have greatly increased his income.

Although not highly significant, the difference in attitudes between those farmers who attended county agent meetings and those who did not attend such meetings was worthy of examination.[46] As can be seen in Table 14, those farmers who attended county meetings were much more likely to comply with acreage controls.

TABLE 14

COMPLIANCE WITH ACREAGE ALLOTMENTS AS RELATED TO THE FARMERS' ATTENDANCE OF COUNTY AGENT MEETINGS

Reaction to Controls	Attended Meetings	Did not Attend Meetings
	Per Cent	
Will comply	62	49
Will not comply	38	51
Total	100	100
Number of respondents	124	158

Just why the farmers that attended county agent meetings tended to be more willing to comply with allotments was difficult to ascertain from the reasons given for either complying or not complying with

[46]Significant at the 5 per cent level of chi square.

allotments. It should be recalled (page 46) that those farmers attending county agent meetings tended to have larger farms. It may have been possible that the larger farmers' interest in the program led them to the meetings in an effort to find a better way to operate with controls. If this was the case, the attendance was the result of the program instead of the county agent being a factor in influencing the farmers to comply with the program. It would appear that the difference was great enough in this category to warrant further investigation in future studies. There were no other significant relationships or trends noted within the other characteristic groups.

Of the 191 farmers who planned to follow acreage controls, 31.9 per cent were going to comply in order to be eligible for the program benefits. (Table 15) An additional 13.6 per cent were going to follow the allotments because they felt they had to comply and had no choice in the matter. They might have felt this way either because they wanted to get supports or else they wanted to avoid any possible penalties. There were no apparent relations between any of the characteristic groups and reasons given for following the allotments. There was a slight tendency for farmers with over 20 years of experience to comply, but because of the small sample involved, the trend would not be of significance.

One-third of the 171 farmers said they would not comply with allotments because of the need for feed. (Table 16) There was a significant difference between the farmers with livestock and those who had no livestock on this response. This would help to explain why there was a difference in compliance with allotments within the type-of-farm characteristics. Many more livestock farmers, especially those having

TABLE 15

REASONS GIVEN BY FARMERS FOR COMPLYING WITH INDIVIDUAL CROP ALLOTMENTS

Reasons	Per Cent
Will comply in order to get program benefits	31.9
Have to comply, no choice in the matter	13.6
Will probably try to fit into the program	12.6
Believe the government policy should be followed	9.4
Will comply if allotments are compulsory	6.3
Will comply if allotments cause only little or no changes in present plans	5.2
Will comply in order to avoid penalty	4.2
Will comply but don't like it	3.7
Will comply on crops to sell but not on feed	2.6
Other reasons	10.5
Total	100.0
Number of respondents 191	

TABLE 16

REASONS GIVEN BY FARMERS FOR NOT COMPLYING WITH INDIVIDUAL CROP ALLOTMENTS

Reasons	Per Cent
Need the crops for feed	33.3
Do not plan on using any of the program benefits	20.5
Don't like allotments, have no use for supports	13.5
Don't see how it's possible to operate with this system	6.4
Not unless there is a compulsory enforcement	5.3
Rather take a chance on growing more and selling on open market	4.7
Can't afford to have idle land	2.3
I have to have so much cash income	2.3
Won't comply on feed crops but will comply on crops to sell	1.7
Don't know	1.2
No answer	8.8
Total	100.0
Number of respondents 121	

intensive livestock operations, did not plan on following allotments because they did not want to reduce their feed crops.

Slightly over one-fifth of the farmers were not going to follow the allotments because they did not plan to use any of the program's benefits. There were no relationships noted for this reason, or any of the other reasons shown in Table 16, for not following the allotments.

On the question of following total farm acreage allotments, usually called cross-compliance, the number who were undecided rose from 13 per cent to 21 per cent. The other 79 per cent were evenly divided on following the cross compliance aspect of the program.

The same relationships that existed between the character groups and the responses on individual allotments were again present. Table 17 shows that again the majority of the intensive livestock farmers did not plan to comply with total farm allotments.

TABLE 17

FARMERS' REACTION TOWARD CROSS-COMPLIANCE AS RELATED TO TYPE OF FARM

Reaction to Allotments	Intensive Livestock	Extensive Livestock	Less than 5 Units	No Livestock
		Per Cent		
Will comply	43	50	54	66
Will not comply	57	50	46	34
Total	100	100	100	100
Number of respondents	173	56	35	62

The greatest significance this time was not between the intensive farmers and all other farmers, but rather between the intensive livestock operator and the farm operator with no livestock. The extensive livestock operator and the farmer with some livestock but less than 5 units were just about equally divided in their reaction toward cross-compliance. Only 43 per cent of the intensive livestock farmers were going to follow allotments, whereas 66 per cent of the farmers with no livestock were going to comply.[47] Most of this difference can be accounted for by the reason given by intensive livestock farmers for not following the allotment, "Need the crops for feed."

Almost exactly the same relationship existed between acres of cropland and willingness to follow total farm acreage allotments as was found between cropland and compliance with individual crop allotments. Only 44 per cent of the farmers having from 140-219 acres of cropland would comply; whereas 63 per cent of the farmers having over 220 acres, and 52 per cent of the farmers having less than 140 acres of tillable land were willing to follow cross-compliance. There was only a small difference between the smaller and middle sized farms.[48] Again farmers with 100-219 acres of cropland were significantly different from those having greater acres of tillable land.[49]

Those farmers who attended the county agent meetings were still more likely to follow the allotments than those farmers who did not attend any of the meetings.

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[47]Significant difference at the 1 per cent level of chi square.

[48]Significant difference at the 10 per cent level of chi square.

[49]Significant difference at the 1 per cent level of chi square.

Although not of statistical importance, in terms of significant difference, there are other relationships in which the empirical data should be considered. The farmers who received 100 per cent of their income from farming were less likely to comply with the total farm allotments than those who received some income from other sources. Only 45 per cent of the 100 per cent farmers would comply as against 58 per cent of the farmers with independent incomes. This difference was not surprising because the 100 per cent farmers tended to be the farmers who had intensive livestock operations and needed the crops for feed. A similar difference exists between farm owners and renters, whether they rent part or all of their land. Sixty per cent of the farm owners indicated they would follow their allotments, but only 46 per cent of the renters planned to comply.

Of the 163 farmers who were planning to comply with the cross-compliance aspect of the program, 30.1 per cent were doing so in order to be eligible for benefits. Another 7.4 per cent planned to comply because they thought allotments and price supports were necessary under present conditions. It was not possible to tell whether the farmers intended to use the program benefits because of high support prices or because of price certainty guaranteed by support prices. Six out of ten farmers gave reasons for complying other than to secure program benefits. The various reasons given for complying with the controls are given in Table 18. Almost one-fourth of the farmers indicated they did not like the controls but felt they must comply because it was the law or because they didn't want to take the chance of being penalized.

The attitudes and reasons given for complying with allotments were not associated with any of the characteristics of the farm or farmers.

TABLE 18

REASONS GIVEN BY FARMERS FOR COMPLYING WITH TOTAL FARM ACREAGE ALLOTMENTS

Reasons	Per Cent
Will comply in order to get program benefits	30.1
Have to comply, no choice in the matter	14.7
Will comply if allotments cause only little or no changes in farm organization	10.4
Will comply but don't like it	9.2
Believe allotments and support are necessary under present conditions	7.4
Have to, can't afford a penalty	3.7
Will comply if allotments are compulsory	3.1
Other reasons	20.2
No answer	1.2
Total	100.0
Number of respondents 163	

As shown in Table 19, 30.7 per cent of the farmers interviewed were not going to comply with total farm acreage allotments because they wanted to continue to grow feed crops. There was very little difference in the reasons given for not following individual crop allotments and those that were given for not following total farm allotments. This would indicate that the farmers didn't believe the cross-compliance aspect would have any more effect on their farming operations than an allotment on one crop. It would appear that the side comment given by some farmers, "If you follow allotments on one crop, you might as well follow it on all crops," was a general feeling on the part of the farmers interviewed.

Present Price Support Levels and How Future Support Levels Should be Determined

Before asking the farmers specific questions on price support levels, the farmers were grouped according to their attitudes toward the parity concept of the support program. This was done by asking the following question:

"Price support programs are usually based on some percentage of parity; that is, we say that cotton is supported at 90 per cent parity. Do you believe that all commodities being supported should be supported at the same percentage of parity at any given time--say, right now?"

Fifty-six per cent of the farmers thought that all commodities being supported should be supported at the same percentage of parity, 19 per cent didn't think that all farm products should be supported at the same level. One-fourth of the farmers didn't express any opinion.

It was found that two of the characteristic groups had certain associations with the way farmers felt about the support level. There was a decided difference between the opinions of farm owners and farmers

TABLE 19

REASONS GIVEN BY FARMERS FOR NOT COMPLYING WITH TOTAL FARM ACREAGE ALLOTMENTS

Reasons	Per Cent
Need the crops for feed	30.7
Do not plan on using any of the program benefits	18.4
Don't see how it's possible to operate with this system	9.8
Don't like allotments, have no use for supports	9.2
Not unless there is a compulsory enforcement	7.4
Would take a chance on selling on the open market	3.7
Need to have cash crops	3.7
Want to stay with rotation	3.7
Other reasons	11.0
No answer	2.4
Total	100.0
Number of respondents 163	

who rented all their land (Table 20).[50] Farmers who owned all the land they operated favored supporting all products at the same level by a four to one ratio. Farmers who rented all the land they operated still favored supports at the same level of parity but only by a three to two ratio. The farmers who owned some of the land they operated and rented the rest were in a position about halfway between complete ownership or tenant status on the question of support levels.

TABLE 20

FARMERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD SUPPORTING FARM COMMODITIES AT THE SAME PERCENTAGE OF PARITY AS RELATED TO OWNERSHIP STATUS

Response	Owned All Land	Owned Some Rented Some	Rented All Land
Should be supported at same level	81	72	61
Should not be supported at same level	19	28	39
Total	100	100	100
Number of respondents	147	93	51

Those farmers who attended meetings conducted by the county agricultural agent were significantly different from those who didn't attend any of the meetings. Both groups favored support levels being the same for all products at about the same rate. The difference was between the should not be and don't know answers. Table 21 shows how these two groups were divided. Twenty-eight per cent of those farmers attending meetings

[50]Difference was significant at the 1 per cent level of chi square.

TABLE 21

FARMERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD SUPPORTING FARM COMMODITIES AT THE SAME PERCENTAGE OF PARITY AS RELATED TO ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS CONDUCTED BY COUNTY AGRICULTURAL AGENTS

Response	Attended Meetings	Did not Attend Meetings
Should be supported at the same percentage of parity	53	54
Should not be supported at the same percentage of parity	28	11
Don't know	19	35
Total	100	100
Number of respondents	139	185

thought supports should be at different levels of parity and only 19 per cent said don't know. On the other hand, only 11 per cent of those farmers not attending county agent meetings wanted supports at different levels and 35 per cent said don't know. Again it appeared that those farmers who attended meetings conducted by the county agents were more likely to express a definite opinion rather than say don't know or no opinion.[51]

The 231 farmers who thought that all farm commodities should be supported at the same percentage of parity were asked if they believed the support levels were presently being determined in this way. About two-thirds of the farmers knew the products were not being so supported and

[51]Significant difference at the 1 per cent level of chi square.

one-fourth didn't know. One-twelfth said that all support levels were at the same percentage of parity.

This last group of farmers thought they knew how the price support levels were determined, but they were mistaken in their understanding of how the parity concept was being used in the price support program. There were no particular characteristics in evidence which would account for these farmers thinking as they did.

The 25 per cent who didn't know if supports were being maintained at the same level of parity probably had very little idea what parity meant. They might have thought it sounded like a good idea to support all commodities at the same level. Apparently these farmers were a random selection, since they appeared to be about equally divided within all of the characteristic groups.

There were 154 farmers who knew that commodities were not being supported at the same percentage of parity but thought it would be desirable if all commodities were so supported. These farmers were asked if they felt that any products were being treated less favorably in relation to others by being supported too low. Nearly 87 per cent of the farmers listed a product they believed was being treated less favorably. Over two-thirds of these farmers gave dairy products as the commodity that was being treated unfavorably. About 5 per cent of the farmers thought all products were treated unfavorably. Other products mentioned were wheat, beef cattle, and rye, barley, or oats.

The dairy farmers more than all other farmers were likely to believe that dairy products were being treated unfavorably.[52] (Table 22) The

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[52]Difference between dairy and non-dairy farmers was significant at the 1 per cent level of chi square.

dairy farmers may have felt that way because they thought feed crops were being supported too high in relation to milk.

TABLE 22

FARM COMMODITIES BELIEVED TO BE SUPPORTED UNFAVORABLY AS RELATED TO TYPE OF FARM

Commodity Supported Unfavorably	Dairy Farms	Other Farms
Dairy products	74	38
Other products	26	62
Total	100	100
Number of respondents	85	69

The farmers were then asked which products they believed were being supported relatively higher than other products. Only 42 per cent of the farmers listed a product which they believed was being supported more favorably. Twenty-eight per cent of the farmers didn't think that any products were supported too high. Another 37 per cent didn't know or gave no answer to the question. Wheat was the commodity listed most often (16 per cent) as being supported favorably in comparison to other farm products. Other products listed were corn, cotton, tobacco, and hogs. It seemed that there was no real antagonism among farmers toward the price support levels. Although the dairy farmers tended to believe that dairy products were being treated unfavorably, they did not seem to blame other parts of agriculture by saying other farm products were being supported too high.

The eighty farmers who did not believe that all farm products should be supported at the same level of parity were asked how they thought the support level for an individual commodity should be determined. Nearly one-third thought the amounts of surpluses should be an important consideration. (Table 23) Another 6 per cent thought support levels should be based on supply and demand for the product and 5 per cent thought there should be a type of flexible control. It appeared that farmers were aware of the surplus problem in agriculture since over 40 per cent of the farmers believed that the support level should be determined in some manner by differences between production and consumption or surpluses.

Next, the farmers who thought that all products were not supported equally were asked which farm products, if any, were being supported too low. Twenty-nine per cent of the farmers listed dairy products, 23 per cent listed various other farm products, but no one product was named more than 4 per cent of the time. Twenty-three per cent of the farmers did not believe that any farm products were being supported too low. There were no relationships noted between any of the characteristics and the products named by the farmers as being supported too low.

Slightly over one-third of the 80 farmers didn't think any products were being supported too high. Thirty-eight per cent of the farmers didn't know or gave no answer to the question. Just a little over one-fourth of the farmers named a product that they believed was being supported too high. The only product named consistently was wheat, which accounted for one-half of the products named. There were no relationships between the characteristics of the farm or farmer and the products listed as being supported too high or between those farmers who said no products were being supported too high.

TABLE 23

FARMERS' OPINIONS ON HOW PRICE SUPPORTS FOR INDIVIDUAL COMMODITIES SHOULD BE DETERMINED

Response	Per Cent
By amounts of surpluses	31.3
By cost of production	12.5
Some type of flexible supports	7.5
By supply and demand	6.2
On the basis of individual yields and production	5.0
Should be based partly on weather conditions	2.5
Supported to provide equality of purchasing power	2.5
Don't believe in price supports	1.2
Other answers	11.3
No answer	3.8
Don't know	16.2
Total	100.0
Number of respondents 80	

The farmers did believe that some products were being supported unfairly, either too high or too low, but there was no consistent group of farmers who felt that any one product was being supported unfairly in relation to other products. Again it seemed that no one group of farmers felt that they were in a worse or better position at the expense of other segments of agriculture.

Knowledge About and Attitudes Toward the Storage Program Versus the Direct Payment Plan

The questions used to gain the farmers' knowledge and attitudes toward the storage program versus the direct payment plan were the same ones that were used in the 1950 study.[53] This was done in order to see if farmers after four more years of operating under the storage program had changed their attitudes. In the four years between studies, there had been considerable discussion of the direct payment plan which may have had an influence on the farmers' understanding and attitudes toward the plan.

In order to get more complete opinions and attitudes of farmers toward the programs, the mechanics of the two proposals were presented in the following situation:

"Two farmers were talking about ways to keep farm prices and incomes from falling too low. They didn't agree on how perishables like butter and eggs should be supported. One of the farmers, Mr. Black, said he favored the present method by which the government buys direct from processors and stores the products in order to hold prices up. Mr. Wood, on the other hand, said that he favored a plan under which farmers would

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[53]Dale E. Hathaway, E. E. Peterson, and Lawrence Witt, Michigan Farmers and the Price Support Program. II. Farmers' Attitudes Toward the Support Program, Michigan State College Agricultural Experiment Station, East Lansing, Michigan, Technical Bulletin 235, December, 1952.

sell all their perishable products, like eggs, for whatever they would bring. If these prices were so low that they would be below the support level, then the government would make direct payments to farmers in order to bring their incomes up."

The farmers were then asked:

"As you see it, what are the advantages of Mr. Black's suggestion that our government continue its present plan of buying perishables direct from processors and storing them? Disadvantages?"

The advantages given by farmers for the storage method of supporting prices are shown in Table 24.

Only about 21 per cent of the farmers gave an advantage for the storage program. The advantage most often mentioned was that the program improved the prices of farm products, but this only accounted for 7 per cent of the farmers. Twenty-eight per cent of the farmers could see no advantages of the storage program for perishables, almost one-third said they didn't know what the advantages were, and another 19 per cent didn't answer the question. In 1950, 40 per cent of the farmers gave advantages for the storage program. In that survey 21 per cent of the farmers liked the program because they felt it raised the price of farm products.[54] The price decline of farm products between 1950 and 1954 was probably the reason for the drop in number of farmers who thought an advantage was higher farm prices.

As can be seen in Table 25, farmers had little difficulty thinking of disadvantages of the present support methods for perishables. Almost 15 per cent didn't think that storage by the government really solved the surplus problem, while another 13 per cent thought the storage of perishables caused waste of food which should have been consumed. About

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[54] Ibid., p. 34.

TABLE 24

ADVANTAGES GIVEN BY FARMERS OF THE STORAGE METHODS OF SUPPORTING PERISHABLE FARM PRODUCTS

Advantages of Present Support Methods	Per Cent
Improves the prices of farm products	7.0
Costs less and is simpler to administer than direct subsidies	2.2
Government storage creates a reserve stockpile of food	2.2
Government purchases stabilize the market	1.2
Farmers get money for product immediately	.2
Helps big farmers and processors	.5
Less red tape	2.7
Saw no advantage in storage methods	28.5
Don't know what the advantages are	31.6
Other answers	5.3
No answer	18.6
Total	100.0
Number of respondents 414	

TABLE 25

DISADVANTAGES GIVEN BY FARMERS OF USING STORAGE METHODS TO SUPPORT PERISHABLE PRODUCTS.

Disadvantages of Present Support Methods	Per Cent
Storage by government doesn't really solve surplus problem	14.5
Causes waste of food which should be consumed	13.1
Costs are too high, wastes tax money	9.2
Helps middlemen not farmers	6.5
Makes food more expensive to consumers	2.4
Causes overproduction	2.4
Not effective in raising prices to farmers	1.5
Only big farmers helped	.2
Saw no disadvantage in storage method	4.1
Other answers	6.0
No answer	13.5
Don't know what the disadvantages are	26.6
Total	100.0
Number of respondents 414	

one-tenth of the farmers thought the cost of the program was too high and that tax money was wasted. Some farmers felt that the storage program helped the middleman instead of farmers. Others thought that the present supports encouraged overproduction. Less than 5 per cent of the farmers could see no disadvantage, 27 per cent didn't know what the disadvantages were, and another 14 per cent didn't answer the question. Over twice as many farmers gave disadvantages as gave advantages for the storage method of supporting prices of perishable products. In 1950 about twice as many farmers felt that costs were too high and that food was wasted which should be consumed.[55]

It was found that farmers who attended county agent meetings were much less likely to give a don't know answer when asked about advantages of the storage program. Only 42.4 per cent of those farmers said don't know, as compared to 58.4 per cent of the farmers who did not attend county agent meetings.[56] When this same comparison was made for those farmers who didn't know what the disadvantages were, the difference was somewhat less.[57]

Also, farmers who rented all or part of their land were less likely to give a don't know answer to both questions than farm owners. The difference in both cases was highly significant.[58] The intensive dairy farmer was more inclined to think that the storage program didn't really solve

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[55]Ibid., p. 35.

[56]Significant difference at the 1 per cent level of chi square.

[57]Significant difference at the 5 per cent level of chi square.

[58]Significant difference at the 1 per cent level of chi square.

the surplus problem than the farmer with no livestock. Twenty-three per cent of the intensive dairy farmers gave this reason as being a disadvantage as compared to 11 per cent of the non-livestock farmers. The dairy farmer was probably more aware of the surplus problem at that time because of the publicity concerning the tremendous quantities of butter and cheese in government storage.

Before the farmers were questioned about their opinions on direct payments they were asked if they had ever heard of the idea of allowing perishable products to sell for whatever they would bring and then pay farmers directly if necessary, to bring up their incomes.

Fifty-two per cent of the farmers indicated they had heard about direct payments from one source or another. (Table 26) About 40 per cent of the farmers said they had never heard of direct payments and about 10 per cent didn't know or else didn't answer the question. In the 1950 survey it was found that 47 per cent of the farmers had heard about direct payments, 50 per cent said they had not heard about direct payments, and only 3 per cent didn't know or gave no answer.[59] (Table 26) In the four year period between surveys there was only a slight increase in the farmers' knowledge about direct payments. It was of interest, however, that the proportion of farmers who associated direct payments with the Brannan Plan declined substantially from 14 per cent to 1 per cent. More farmers in the 1954 study tended to be uncertain about whether they had heard about direct payments rather than being sure that they had not heard of the direct payment program.

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[59]Hathaway, Peterson, and Witt, op. cit., p. 36.

TABLE 26

THE FAMILIARITY OF FARMERS WITH THE DIRECT PAYMENT PLAN AS SHOWN BY THE 1950 AND 1954 SURVEYS

Knowledge of Direct Payments	1950 Survey	1954 Survey
	Per Cent	
Have heard of the direct payment idea	33	40
It is part of the Brannan Plan	14	1
Heard of it during World War II	--	11
Total that had heard of direct payments	47	52
Have never heard of direct payments	50	39
Don't know if had heard of direct payments	2	6
No answer	1	3
Total	100	100
Number of respondents	500	414

A greater percentage of farmers having more than five units of livestock had heard about direct payments than those with less than five units or no livestock at all. Part of this difference could be accounted for by the intensive dairy operators, 15 per cent of whom had experience with such payments on milk or cream during World War II. Nearly half of the farmers with less than ten years of farming experience had not heard of direct payments hwereas only one-third of the farmers with more than ten years of farming experience had not heard of direct payments. Again, this could be related to the fact that a greater number of farmers with over ten years of farming experience had come in contact with direct payments on milk and cream during the war.

Farmers who belonged to a farm organization or attended meetings conducted by county agents were more apt to have heard about direct payments than the other farmers (Table 27).

TABLE 27

KNOWLEDGE OF DIRECT PAYMENTS BY FARMERS WHO ATTENDED COUNTY AGENT MEETINGS OR BELONGED TO A FARM ORGANIZATION

Knowledge of Direct Payments	Attended County Agent Meetings	Did not Attend any Meetings	Belonged to a Farm Organization	Did not Belong to a Farm Organization
Have heard	62	46	63	50
Have not heard	38	54	37	50
Total	100	100	100	100
Number of respondents	107	152	186	146

There was a significant difference between those who did and those who did not attend county agent meetings.[60] The difference between those who belonged and those who didn't belong to a farm organization was slightly less significant.[61]

The farmers were next asked: "What do you feel are the advantages of such a plan? Disadvantages?"

Approximately six out of ten farmers saw no advantages for direct payments, responded don't know, or gave no answer at all. (Table 28) This compares with eight out of ten farmers who gave similar answers about the storage program. The largest group of farmers who gave advantages said direct payments would lower food costs to consumers and thus increase consumption. Others said there would be no loss to the government from storage and waste, and that farm prices would be raised to the farmers. Some felt that the advantage of direct payments would be the elimination of the processor's participation in the support benefits. There was very little difference between the advantages given in 1950 and those given in 1954. There were no relationships noted between advantages given and any of the characteristic groups.

About 10 per cent of the farmers could see no disadvantages of direct payments. (Table 29) There were an additional 48 per cent who had no opinions or did not answer the question; this is contrasted with 40 per cent who had no opinion or didn't comment on disadvantages of the storage program. Of those farmers who gave disadvantages, the main disadvantage

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[60]Difference was significant at the 1 per cent level of chi square.

[61]Difference was significant at the 2 per cent level of chi square.

TABLE 28

ADVANTAGES GIVEN BY FARMERS OF USING DIRECT PAYMENTS TO SUPPORT PERISHABLE COMMODITIES

Advantages of Direct Payments	Per Cent
Lowers cost of food to consumers, increases consumption	12.6
No loss to government from storage and waste	6.0
Raises price to farmers	4.6
Clears market	4.4
Cuts out processors	3.6
Reduces waste of food	1.9
Saw no advantages in direct payments	19.1
Other answers	7.7
No answer	14.5
Don't know	25.6
Total	100.0
Number of respondents 414	

TABLE 29

DISADVANTAGES GIVEN BY FARMERS OF USING DIRECT PAYMENTS TO SUPPORT PERISHABLE COMMODITIES

Disadvantages of Direct Payments	Per Cent
Will cost government too much	11.1
Difficult and costly to administer	5.3
Would cause overproduction	4.6
Would have too much red tape	4.3
Don't like idea of government handout	3.9
Would make farm incomes dependent on Department of Agriculture policies	1.4
Would take too long to get money	1.0
Would cause too much regimentation	.2
Saw no disadvantages in direct payments	10.4
Other answers	10.4
No answer	16.7
Don't know	30.7
Total	100.0
Number of respondents 414	

given was "the high cost to the government" which was given by one-tenth of the farmers. Approximately 5 per cent of the farmers were concerned about becoming too dependent on government policies or else didn't like the idea of a government handout. Other farmers believed that the program would be difficult and costly to administer, result in a lot of red tape, and involve waiting long periods of time for their money from the government. There were about one-half as many farmers concerned about the high cost and administrative aspects in the 1954 study as in the 1950 study.

When the different disadvantages were considered it was found that there was a significant difference between those farmers who attended county agent meetings and those who didn't attend the meetings in giving the disadvantage, "Difficult and costly to administer." Over twice as many farmers who attended the meetings gave this disadvantage than those who did not attend the meetings.

After the farmers had given advantages and disadvantages for the two methods of price supports, they were asked which method of support they preferred. It was found they had a preference for direct payments. Over one-third of the farmers preferred the direct payments and less than one-fourth of those questioned wanted the storage method. There were, however, over 30 per cent which didn't express an opinion as to which method they preferred and there was an additional 7 per cent who didn't favor either method. (Table 30) There was a considerable shift in attitudes toward the two methods of support between the survey conducted in 1950 and the survey used in this study. In 1950 those farmers interviewed showed a

TABLE 30

FARMERS' CHOICE AS TO METHODS OF SUPPORTING PERISHABLE PRODUCTS

Method of Supports Preferred	Per Cent
Storage methods used at present	21.5
Direct payments to farmers	38.9
Don't know	29.5
Don't want either one	7.0
No answer	3.1
Total	100.0
Number of respondents 414	

slight preference for the storage method of supporting prices. Twenty-two per cent did not know which method they preferred and 10 per cent did not favor either method.[62]

It was found that farmers who rented all their land had little preference for either method. Farmers who owned all their land were definitely in favor of direct payments, while those farmers who owned part of their land and rented the rest tended to take a position in between the two.[63] (Table 31)

TABLE 31

FARMERS' CHOICES AS TO METHOD OF SUPPORTING PERISHABLE PRODUCTS AS RELATED TO TENURE STATUS

Support Method Preferred	Owned All Land	Owned Some Rented Some	Rented All Land
		Per Cent	
Storage method	27	39	49
Direct payments	73	61	51
Total	100	100	100
Number of respondents	103	84	43

There was also an association noted between farming experience and age of the operator and the choice of method preferred for support prices on perishable products. Table 32 shows these various relationships.

[62]Hathaway, Peterson, and Witt, op. cit., p. 38.

[63]The difference between those farmers who own all their land and those who rent all their land was significant at the 2 per cent level of chi square.

TABLE 32

YEARS OF FARMING EXPERIENCE AND AGE IN YEARS OF RESPONDENTS IN RELATION TO THE FARMERS' CHOICE AS TO METHOD OF SUPPORTING PERISHABLE PRODUCTS

Support Method Preferred	Farming Experience			Age		
	Less Than 11	11-20	Over 20	Under 36	36-55	Over 55
Storage method	46	35	27	46	37	22
Direct payments	54	65	73	54	63	78
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number of respondents	76	79	95	59	133	58

In both cases there was very little difference between either of the extreme groups and the middle group.[64]

According to the results of the 1950 and 1954 studies on farmers' attitudes toward the storage and direct payment there was a shift in favor of direct payments. In the later study, the farmers considered high costs as only a minor disadvantage of both programs. Except for the difference just noted, the farmers only slightly changed their attitudes toward the advantages and disadvantages of the direct payment program. After operating under the storage program for four years the farmers didn't see as many advantages of the program, but neither did they give as many disadvantages. In 1954, the farmers were less likely to express an opinion on the advantages and disadvantages of the storage program.

[64]The difference between extreme groups was significant at the 2 per cent level of chi square.

It would appear that the farmers were becoming more discontented with the storage program, but did not know exactly why. The discontentment with the storage program may have been the reason for the shift in favor of the direct payment plan.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

In the summer of 1964 a survey was taken of 414 Michigan farmers to determine the effects of the United States Department of Agriculture production control programs upon Michigan farms and to further determine the attitudes of the farmers toward these programs. The sample areas studied represented various important commercial farming areas of Michigan. In addition, these areas were so located that managerial decisions involved different kinds of alternatives as the result of production controls. In order to stay within the objective of including only commercial farms and farms facing adjustment problems, only those farms having a wheat allotment of 15 acres or more were included in the sample.

Only that segment of the survey dealing with the attitudes of the farmers toward the government programs was used in this study. There were five main facets of the government programs considered: (1) Attitudes of the farmers toward continued acreage controls and the effects of a continued allotment program on their farm, (2) Attitudes toward marketing quotas and the penalty enforcement, whether it was on wheat fed on the farm or sold in the market, (3) Attitudes on compliance with allotments on individual crops and total farm acreage allotments, (4) Attitudes toward support levels and the method used in determining the level, (5) Attitudes toward and knowledge about the storage programs versus the direct payment plan.

Besides determining the farmers' attitudes toward the various phases of the government programs, an analysis was carried out on possible relationships between the attitudes and characteristics of the farm and farmer. The characteristics of the farmer which were considered as possibly influencing his attitudes were: farming experience, age, tenure status, per cent of income from farming, farm organization membership and attendance at meetings held by the county agricultural agent. The farm characteristics considered were: total acreage, total tillable acreage, type of farm, and intensity of livestock programs.

Over 90 per cent of the farmers interviewed indicated that they had given some thought about the possibility of continued acreage allotments and nearly eight out of ten farmers thought the allotment program would be continued. Thus the allotment program had come to be expected as an inevitable aspect of farming. When the farmers were asked what changes they would make in farm operations and farm organization if acreage allotments continued, about one-fourth said they would make few or no changes. About 16 per cent of the farmers thought continued allotments would mean a change in their cropping system. Another 15 per cent didn't know what changes, if any, would be necessary in the farm operations or organization. Intensive dairy farmers were more likely to believe that their farm operations would not be affected than cash crop farmers. When changes in farm organization were considered it was found that farmers with less than 180 acres of land and farmers over 56 years of age were less likely to make changes because of allotments.

In spite of the possible effect of marketing quotas on farm operations, only four out of ten farmers took part in the wheat marketing

quota vote in 1953 and 1954. Although approximately the same number of farmers voted in the two years, there was a considerable shift in the way the farmers voted. In 1953, of the farmers voting, 61 per cent voted for quotas, 34 per cent voted against quotas, and 5 per cent didn't remember how they voted or didn't answer the question. In the 1954 vote only 40 per cent of the farmers were for quotas, 45 per cent were against quotas, and 15 per cent did not indicate how they stood on the issue. The change in the vote did not result from farmers changing the way they voted, but rather, the change was due to a different composition of farmers that took part in the balloting. It was found that farmers who attended meetings conducted by the county agricultural agent were more likely to take part in the balloting. Also, as the size of the farm increased, it was more likely that the farm operator participated in the voting. The only characteristic that appeared to have any association with the way the farmer voted was his farming experience. Farmers with more than 20 years of experience were more likely to favor marketing restrictions than farmers with less experience.

Over two-thirds of the farmers thought the government would enforce the penalty for wheat sold on the market, but only about half as many farmers thought the penalty would be enforced for wheat fed on the farm. Most of the farmers believed the penalty would be enforced for wheat sold on the market because the penalty was part of a law or else because they knew the penalty had been enforced before or was in the process of being enforced. The farmers who believed the penalty would be enforced for wheat fed on the farm had no particular reason for believing as they did. The only reason given with any consistency was "The government says it

will enforce the penalty." Of those farmers who didn't believe the penalty would be enforced for either wheat sold or wheat fed, about one-half thought the law was impossible to enforce. Farming experience was the only characteristic that was associated with the attitudes toward the penalty enforcement. The majority of farmers with 5 to 20 years of farming experience didn't think the penalty would be enforced for wheat fed on the farm, whereas over 50 per cent of the farmers with either more or less experience thought the penalty would be enforced.

When the farmers were questioned about complying with acreage allotments it was found that they had about the same reactions toward both the individual crop allotments and total farm acreage allotments. Forty-six per cent of the farmers indicated they would follow individual allotments, 41 per cent said they would not comply, and 13 per cent were undecided as to what they would do. The number of undecided rose to nearly 21 per cent when the total farm acreage allotments were considered, and the other 79 per cent were about evenly divided on following this cross-compliance aspect of the program. In both cases the intensive livestock operators were less inclined to follow the allotments than were farmers with other types of farms. Also the farmers having 140-219 acres of tillable land were less likely to follow allotments than those farmers operating either more or less acres of tillable land. On the positive side, the farmers who attended meetings conducted by the county agent were more likely to comply with both individual crop and total farm allotments than those farmers who did not attend any of the meetings. Nearly one-third of the farmers who planned to comply with allotments were doing so in order to be eligible for the program benefits.

Of those farmers who did not plan to follow the allotments, nearly one-third felt they could not reduce their feed crops. The intensive livestock farmers especially felt this way. There were only small differences between the reasons given for complying or not complying with individual crop allotments and the reasons for compliance or non-compliance with total farm acreage allotments. The farmers apparently felt that if they complied on one they might as well comply with both aspects of the allotment program.

In order to get the farmers' attitudes toward price support levels they were asked if they thought that all farm commodities being supported should be supported at the same percentage of parity. Fifty-six per cent of the farmers thought they should be supported the same, 19 per cent didn't think that all farm products should be supported at the same level, and one-fourth didn't express an opinion. Farm owners were more likely to believe there should be equal supports than farmers who rented all the land they operated.

Of the farmers who wanted all supports to be maintained at the same level of parity, only about two-thirds knew the levels were not being so supported at that time. This group of farmers was asked which products they believed were being treated unfairly. Nearly 87 per cent of the farmers listed products they believed were being treated less favorably; dairy products accounted for two-thirds of the products. Only 42 per cent of the farmers listed a product as being supported favorably in comparison to other products. There appeared to be no real antagonism among farmers toward price support levels. Although dairy farmers tended to believe that dairy products were being treated unfavorably,

they did not seem to blame other parts of agriculture by saying other farm products were being supported too high.

Those farmers who did not believe that all products should be supported at the same level of parity gave various opinions on how support levels for individual commodities should be determined. However, nearly 50 per cent believed the support level should be determined in some manner by surpluses of the commodity.

The questions used to gain the farmers' knowledge and attitudes toward the storage program and direct payment plan used in this study were the same ones used in a similar study in 1950. During the four year period there was a considerable shift in attitudes toward the two methods of support. In 1950 the farmers had no strong preference for either method of support, 34 per cent preferred the storage method, and 32 per cent liked the idea of direct payments. The other 34 per cent didn't know which they wanted or else didn't like either plan. In 1954 only 22 per cent wanted the storage program and those who liked the direct payment plan idea increased to 39 per cent. There were still over one-third who did not know which plan they preferred or else didn't want either method of support. Farmers who owned all their land were much more in favor of direct payments than those farmers who rented all the land that they operated. Those farmers who owned part of their land and rented some additional land tended to take a position in between those farmers with complete ownership and those who rented all their land. The farmers who had over 20 years of farming experience, or were over 55 years of age, tended to be more favorable toward direct payments

than other farmers. In the later study, the farmers considered high costs as only a minor disadvantage of both programs.

Except for the difference just noted, the farmers only slightly changed their attitudes toward the advantages and disadvantages of the direct payment program. After operating under the storage program for four years the farmers didn't see as many advantages of the program, but neither did they give as many disadvantages. The farmers who attended county agent meetings were less likely to give a don't know answer when asked about the advantages and disadvantages of the storage program than were those farmers who never attended any of the meetings. Also those farmers who attended the meetings had a better knowledge of direct payments than the other farmers who didn't attend.

Conclusions

In general, it appeared that farmers had become accustomed to acreage allotments and accepted them as part of routine farming. Many of the farmers had so established their farming operations and organization that they could continue operating under allotments without any undue difficulties. Most of these farmers, however, had accepted the allotments with the idea that they could comply or not comply as the immediate situation dictated. If the program benefits were great enough they would comply, but if they thought they could achieve greater income by raising larger acreages or if they needed feed crops, they would not comply. When programs such as marketing quotas were put forth, they were not so willing to accept the control. A more stringent control such as marketing

quotas did not leave the farmer as free a choice to comply or not to comply, and thus the farmers were reluctant to commit themselves to future allotments. Although the majority of the farmers were following the acreage controls to get the program benefits, they wanted to think they had a freedom to do as they wished and the penalty aspect of the marketing quotas just about eliminated the farmers' freedom of choice. In spite of the possible effect of marketing quotas, and though fewer farmers were willing to accept the quotas, only four out of ten farmers took part in the balloting in 1954. It would appear that the farmers after all were somewhat indifferent to the government programs and were willing to accept what was put before them by someone else.

Farmers were not willing to accept the more rigid production controls, yet over one-half of the farmers believed that all supports should be maintained at the same level of parity. Of those farmers who didn't think supports should be maintained at the same percentage of parity, almost 50 per cent believed that the support level had to be hinged in some manner to the surpluses of the individual products.

During the four year period between 1950 and 1954 the farmers modified their attitudes toward the methods of supporting farm prices. In 1950 the farmers had no strong preference for either the storage program or the direct payments plan. In 1954 it was found that there had been a considerable shift in favor of the direct payment plan. The farmers gave about the same advantages and disadvantages of the two proposed programs in both 1950 and 1954 so no clear cut explanation was available as to why the farmers were more willing to accept the idea of direct payments. There was a decline in farm prices during this period and the farmers may have been

disillusioned as to the price supporting abilities of the storage program. Also after operating under the storage program for four more years the farmers may have been somewhat discontented with the program and were more willing to accept other alternatives. The direct payment plan being the alternative proposed in the studies tended to be more readily accepted.

Farmers have accepted the idea of acreage allotments and price supports and appear to be in search of different alternatives in maintaining these programs. Often these programs become intensely technical and complex, thus a better system of communications is needed to provide more information on alternatives to the farmers in order that they may be able to develop a more informed opinion and exercise their rights and obligations as citizens.

APPENDIX

A. EXCERPTS FROM QUESTIONNAIRE ON WHICH THIS STUDY WAS BASED

B. CONVERSION RATES FOR LIVESTOCK TO STANDARD ANIMAL UNITS

C. COMPOSITION OF SAMPLE CHARACTERISTIC GROUPS USED IN THIS STUDY

APPENDIX A

EXCERPTS FROM QUESTIONNAIRE ON WHICH THIS STUDY WAS BASED

EXCERPTS FROM QUESTIONNAIRE ON WHICH

THIS STUDY WAS BASED

No._____
Revised
June 21, 1954

Michigan State College
Farm Management Survey

The information obtained in this questionnaire is intended to be used only for the purpose of research. All information pertaining to individuals will remain confidential and the names of persons cooperating in this survey will not be made public.

County_____ Township_____				
Interviewer	Date	Time Begun	Time Ended	Completed

1. How many total acres are in the farm or farms you are operating in 1954?_____ How many did you farm in 1953?
_____

	1954	1953
2. How many acres of cropland (tillable acres)?	_____	_____
3. How many acres of permanent pasture (not woods)?	_____	_____
4. How many acres of woodlot?	_____	_____
5. How many acres in buildings, etc.?	_____	_____
Total	_____	_____

6. You mentioned you are farming _____ acres of tillable land. How many acres of it are idle and not being used for field crops or pasture in 1954? _____ In 1953? _____

7. What proportion of your total income is from farming? _____%

   a. (IF LESS THAN 100%) what is your major source of non-farm income? _____

8. a. What is your ownership or tenure status on the land you farm?

   1. Own all of land you farm? _____
   2. Own some land and rent additional land? _____
   3. Rent all of land that you farm? _____
   4. Manage farm for someone else as hired manager? _____
   5. Operate land in partnership with someone else? _____
   6. Other _____

   b. (IF PART OF LAND OPERATED IS RENTED) how many acres of land are rented? _____

- - -

14. a. Did you vote on the wheat marketing quota in 1953?

   Yes____; How did you vote? Yes____
   No____
   N.A.____
   Don't remember____

   No____.
   D.K.____.

15. Did you vote on marketing quota for the 1955 wheat crop? (July 23, 1954)

   Yes____; How did you vote? Yes____
   No____
   N.A.____
   D.K.____

   No____.
   D.K.____.

- - -

26.

Kind of Livestock	No. on hand July 1, 1954	No. on hand July 1, 1953
1.____Dairy cows		
2.____Heifers (Dairy)		
3.____Beef cows (Breeding)		
4.____Feeder cattle		
5.____Bred sows		
6.____Hogs on feed		
7.____Laying hens		
8.____Pullets		
9.____Broilers		
10.____Turkey, geese, etc.		
11.____Sheep, ewes		
12.____Feeder lambs		
13.____Other_____		
14.____Other_____		

- - -

33. Have you given any thought to whether we will continue to have acreage allotments on some crops for several years? Yes____ No____

How do you feel about the possibility of acreage allotments every year for several years?_____

_____

34. What effect do you think the allotments will have on your farming operations if they continue for a period of time?_____

_____

35. What changes, if any, do you plan to make in your present farm organization if the acreage allotments are continued?_____

_____

36. This year, for the first time in more than ten years, we have marketing quotas on the wheat crop. According to the law, all farmers who produce more than 15 acres of wheat must comply with their acreage allotments, or pay cash penalties of about $1.12 per bushel on each bushel produced on all of the acreage over their allotments.

a. If the wheat is sold, do you believe the government will enforce the penalty of $1.12 per bushel on the farmers who exceed their allotments?

Yes ____; Why?_____

No _____; Why?_____

D.K. ___.

b. If all of the wheat is fed on the farm, do you believe the government will enforce the penalty on farmers who exceeded their wheat acreage allotments?

Yes ____; Why?_____

No _____; Why?_____

D.K. ___.

37. It has been announced that next year there will be cross-compliance on all crops with acreage allotments. This means that a farmer will have to comply with the acreage allotments on all crops which have them or get no price supports on any of his crops. In addition, each farm which has more than 10 acres removed from controlled

crops will receive a total farm acreage allotment that will include the controlled crops plus the 1953 acreage of other crops. Compliance with this total farm allotment will also be necessary on those farms which get one, in order to receive any price supports.

a. Will you comply with acreage allotments on the individual crops?

Yes ____; Why?_____

No _____; Why?_____

D.K. ___.

b. Will you comply with a total acreage allotment on your farm if you receive one?

Yes ____; Why?_____

No _____; Why?_____

D.K. ___.

38. a. How would your wheat acreage compare with that which you harvested in 1953 if there were no controls but the price you expected to receive was one-third lower than for last year's crop?

(1)_____D.K.
(2)_____About the same
(3)_____Decrease wheat acreage
(4)_____Increase wheat acreage

b. Why would you take this action?_____

_____

c. (IF WHEAT ACREAGE WOULD BE CHANGED, ASK:) What other crops would you increase (or decrease) to offset the changes in wheat acreage?_____

d. Why would you choose that crop or crops?_____

_____

39. a. How would your corn acreage compare with that harvested in 1953 if there were no controls but the price you expected to receive was one-third lower than last year's crop?

(1)_____D.K.
(2)_____About the same
(3)_____Decrease corn acreage
(4)_____Increase corn acreage

b. Why would you take this action?_____

_____

c. (IF CORN ACREAGE WOULD BE CHANGED, ASK:) What other crops would you increase (or decrease) to offset the changes in corn acreage?

_____

d. Why would you choose that crop or crops?_____

_____

40. Price support programs are usually based on some percentage of parity; that is, we say that cotton is supported at 90 per cent parity. Do you believe that all commodities being supported should be supported at the same percentage of parity at any given time - say, right now?

Yes ____; Do you think that all products are supported at the same percentage of parity now?

Yes ____.

No ____; Which products do you feel are being treated less favorably in relation to others by being supported too low?_____

_____

Which, if any, products do you believe are being supported relatively higher than other crops?

_____

D.K.____.

No ____; How should the support level for an individual commodity be determined?_____

_____

Which products, if any, do you feel are being supported too low at the present time?_____

Which products, if any, do you feel are being supported at too high a level?_____

D.K.____.

41. Two farmers were talking about ways to keep farm prices and incomes from falling too low. They didn't agree on how perishables like butter and eggs should be supported. One of the farmers, Mr. Black, said he favored the present method by which the government buys direct from processors and stores the products in order to hold prices up. Mr. Wood, on the other hand, said that he favored a plan under which farmers would sell all their perishable products, like eggs, for whatever they would bring. If these prices were so low that they would be below the support level, then the government would make direct payments to farmers in order to bring their incomes up.

a. As you see it, what are the advantages of Mr. Black's suggestion that our government continue its present plan of buying perishables direct from processors and storing them?_____

_____

What are the disadvantages?_____

_____

b. Have you ever heard of Mr. Wood's idea, that our government would allow perishable products to sell for whatever they would bring and then pay farmers direct, if necessary, to bring their incomes up?

1. Yes, _____

2. No, _____

3. D.K. _____.

(a) What do you feel are the advantages of such a plan?

_____

_____

(b) Disadvantages?_____

_____

(c) In general, assuming perishables are going to be supported, which of the two ideas for handling perishable products do you prefer?

1. Purchase from processors ____
2. Direct payments to farmers ____
3. D.K. ____

42. Approximately how long have you been farming as a farm operator?

_____ 1. Less than five years
_____ 2. Five to ten years
_____ 3. Eleven to fifteen years
_____ 4. Sixteen to twenty years
_____ 5. Over twenty years
_____ 6. N.A.

43. Would you mind telling me your age?

_____ 1. Under 25
_____ 2. 25-35
_____ 3. 36-45
_____ 4. 46-55
_____ 5. 56-65
_____ 6. Over 65

44. How many of your family live on this farm?_____

45. Do you usually go to the meetings held by your county agricultural agent if they deal with a product you produce?
Yes_____ No_____ N.A. _____

46. Do you belong to one or more of the general farm organizations?

_____ 1. Farm Bureau
_____ 2. Grange
_____ 3. Farmers Union
_____ 4. Farm Bureau and Grange
_____ 5. Farm Bureau and F. U.
_____ 6. Grange and F. U.
_____ 7. All three
_____ 8. Other_____
_____ 9. None

I would like to get your name and mailing address correctly.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

_____

_____

APPENDIX B

CONVERSION RATES FOR LIVESTOCK TO STANDARD ANIMAL UNITS

CONVERSION RATES FOR LIVESTOCK TO STANDARD ANIMAL UNITS

The animal units were converted using a cow as a standard unit. It is based primarily on manure produced in one year per 1,000 pounds of live weight as follows:*

	Head of Animals Equal To One Animal Unit	Tons of Manure Produced In One Year Per 1,000 Pounds of Live Weight
Cow	1	12.0
Steer	1	8.5
Horse	1	8.0
Sheep	8	6.0
Hogs	6	16.0
Chickens	250	4.5

*Illinois Agricultural Handbook, 1949, p. 206.

APPENDIX C

COMPOSITION OF SAMPLE CHARACTERISTIC GROUPS USED IN THIS STUDY

TABLE 33

COMPOSITION OF SAMPLE CHARACTERISTIC GROUPS
USED IN THIS STUDY

TABLE 33-A

FARMING EXPERIENCE OF OPERATOR

Years	Per Cent
Under 5	9.0
5-10	21.5
11-15	14.0
16-20	15.2
Over 20	40.1
No Answer	.2
Total	100.0
Number of respondents	414

TABLE 33-B

AGE OF OPERATOR

Years	Per Cent
Under 25	3.8
25-35	20.3
36-45	28.7
46-55	20.8
56-65	16.7
Over 65	9.7
Total	100.0
Number of respondents	414

TABLE 33-C

MEMBERSHIP IN A FARM ORGANIZATION

Organization	Per Cent
Farm Bureau	50.7
Grange	1.7
Farmers Union	.2
Farm Bureau and Grange	2.2
Farm Bureau and Farmers Union	0
Grange and Farmers Union	0
All Three	.2
None	45.0
Total	100.0
Number of respondents	414

TABLE 33-D

PER CENT OF INCOME FROM FARMING

Per Cent Income	Per Cent
0- 9.9	1.9
10-19.9	3.9
20-29.9	3.6
30-39.9	3.4
40-49.9	.7
50-59.9	7.3
60-69.9	1.0
70-79.9	1.9
80-89.9	4.6
90-99.9	4.8
100	66.9
Total	100.0
Number of respondents	414

TABLE 33-E

TENURE STATUS OF OPERATOR

Status	Per Cent
Own all the farm	47.8
Own some land and rent some	29.0
Rent all the land farmed	15.7
Manage farm	1.0
Operate land in partnership	4.6
Other	1.9
Total	100.0
Number of respondents	414

TABLE 33-F

ATTENDANCE OF COUNTY AGENT MEETINGS

Answer	Per Cent
Yes	33.6
No	44.7
Sometimes	20.5
No Answer	1.2
Total	100.0
Number of respondents	414

TABLE 33-G

TOTAL FARM ACREAGE OF FARMS ENUMERATED

Acres	Per Cent
0- 69	2.9
70- 99	8.2
100-139	12.3
140-179	20.5
180-219	14.2
220-259	12.6
260-299	8.0
300-499	16.7
500-	4.6
Total	100.0
Number of respondents	414

TABLE 33-H

TILLABLE ACREAGE OF FARMS ENUMERATED

Acres	Per Cent
0- 69	9.2
70- 99	11.8
100-139	21.0
140-179	20.3
180-219	13.3
220-259	10.2
260-299	4.8
300-	9.4
Total	100.0
Number of respondents	414

TABLE 33-I

TYPE OF FARM AND INTENSITY OF LIVESTOCK PROGRAM

Type and Intensity	Per Cent	Per Cent
Dairy	47.3	
Intensive		36.9
Extensive		10.4
Beef	9.4	
Intensive		6.3
Extensive		3.1
Hogs	5.3	
Intensive		3.9
Extensive		1.4
Other	3.9	
Intensive		2.4
Extensive		1.5
General	4.8	
Intensive		3.1
Extensive		1.7
Less than 5 units of livestock	9.7	
No livestock	19.6	
Total	100.0	70.7
Number of respondents 414		

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