

USE OF PRICE AND MARKET
INFORMATION BY FARMERS IN
CALHOUN COUNTY, MICHIGAN

THESIS FOR THE DEGREE OF M. A.
Culver Dumont Wilcox
1932

Farm produce - Marketing

**SUPPLEMENTARY
MATERIAL
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BY FARMERS IN CALHOUN COUNTY, MICHIGAN

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A thesis

Respectfully submitted to the faculty
of the Michigan State College in
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for the degree of Master of Arts
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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

1. TYPES AND SOURCES OF ECONOMIC INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO
FARMERS

In the self sufficing days of the early colonial farmers there was little or no need for any information regarding national production or prices. The products sold, other than those from the southern plantations, were mainly in the nature of incidental surplus. Even if the prices were better elsewhere, the difficulties of transportation made it impossible to market these goods except near home.

The progressive cheapening of transportation costs, through the development of canals, steam navigation, and railroads, served to widen the competitive marketing area, and to induce greater specialization in agriculture. This led to a growing realization of the importance, both to farmers and to middlemen, of information regarding agricultural production, stocks, and prices. The collection of such statistical material on an adequate scale is obviously beyond the resources of farmers themselves, while most of them lack the time and training necessary to analyze and interpret the material, even if they could assemble it.

Insofar as the information might be gathered by

middlemen, there would be the disposition to use it for their own competitive and bargaining advantage, rather than to make it freely available. The one agency which possesses both the resources and the authority to assemble comprehensive and authentic statistical data, and which is impartially interested in making it freely available to all concerned, is the federal government.

The Civil War period saw the establishment of the federal crop reporting service and of the land-grant colleges. With the continued expansion of agricultural commerce the service of collecting, disseminating, and interpreting of agricultural production, market, and outlook statistics and information were correspondingly expanded on a nation wide scale until they covered every important farm product and primary market. The development of these services has been most conspicuous since the consolidation, in 1921, of the Bureau of Crop Estimates, and the Bureau of Markets, and the federal office of Farm Management and Economics, into the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. During the following decade federal appropriations for activities of the bureau, and for grants-in-aid to state marketing and extension services, were expanded on a generous scale, in accordance with the established policy of indirect aid to agriculture.

Information is available today on over eighty different crops covering the phases of acreage, yield,



production, and prices; it is also available on most of the classes of livestock and livestock products, types and quantities marketed, quantities and types in storage, with import and export data on both livestock and field products. There is other information also, on such matters as land values, taxes, farm wages, indicated changes in production, price outlook, and a miscellany of other items of more local interest.

This comprehensive agricultural economic information may be broadly classified, according to character and content, into three principal types, viz.

1. Crop and livestock reports and estimates
2. Current market reports
3. Outlook information

1. The crop and livestock reports and estimates include that type of information released monthly and annually by the crop reporting service. This material is divided into two classes. One is made up of information, obtained by the sampling method, regarding the supplies on hand of crops yet to be marketed, numbers of livestock, wages paid to farm labor, and similar other records of information that may be considered as past records. The other, also collected by sampling, includes information regarding intentions to plant and breed, on which it is possible to base predictions.

2. As contrasted with the above, the current market

reports, which will be treated more fully later, are complete records of day by day or week by week sales, car lot shipments, and similar records of actual business done at a definite time.

3. The outlook information is built partly on data assembled specifically for that purpose and partly on the other two types of information described briefly above. This material is then organized and digested in order to make available to farmers details that will assist them in planning their production programs so that the individual farmer will be able to secure the greatest return for the labor and capital with which he has to work. It is also designed to assist the individual to plan his production to fit a long-time marketing scheme.

This outlook information is first assembled as material for a bulletin issued by the United States Department of Agriculture, with a national viewpoint. Pertinent material from this, together with other information of more interest to individual states, is then assembled and adapted in the form of state agricultural outlooks, by workers in the various land-grant colleges. Efforts are then made to mediate this information to farmers through agricultural economics extension specialists and county agricultural agents.

The channels through which these various forms of information become

available to the individual farmer may be classified as follows:

1. Publications and releases of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics
2. Bulletins and reports of the State Agricultural Colleges and State Departments of Agriculture
3. Commercial periodicals and market letters
4. Organs and news letters of cooperative marketing associations
5. Radio broadcasts
6. Extension meetings

1. The publications and releases of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics are probably of the greatest importance when considering sources. Of these publications and releases three main types will be considered here; there are many others but they are not ^{intended} for use by the farmer.

The monthly bulletin, known as "Crops and Markets", is available to agricultural workers free and to private individuals by subscription. It contains both outlook information and other tables on which to base long-time production programs, as well as current data on almost every phase of agriculture. "The Agricultural Situation" is a bulletin size monthly publication issued on approximately the same basis as "Crops and Markets". This, as its title indicates, is "A Brief Summary of Economic

Conditions", and analyzes agricultural conditions, past and present, and then points the way by which production programs may be adjusted to meet these conditions.

"The Market News Service" information is issued mainly in the form of stenciled sheets from each of the larger markets, in which representatives from the Bureau of Agricultural Economics are stationed. These sheets state the prices for the types of products which that market handles, the quantities and qualities offered for sale, and a short discussion of the condition of the market. These reports are made up at the end of each selling day and are made available either then or at the beginning of the next marketing day. As an illustration of this we have issued from the United States Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Market News Service, Room 301, 999 Exchange Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, (which is the Chicago Stock Yards), the following: "The Daily Livestock Market Report"; "Daily Meat Trade Conditions and Wholesale Prices"; "Receipts and Disposition of Livestock at Public Stockyards"; "Animals Slaughtered under Federal Meat Inspection"; "The Saturday Livestock and Hog Slaughter Report"; "Livestock Market Statistics"(Monthly); "The Weekly Review of the Chicago Livestock Market"; "The Weekly Review of Wholesale Meat Trade Conditions"; "The Monthly Average of Wholesale Prices of Fresh and Cured Pork Products and Lard"; and some others

of this general nature.

There are about one hundred different types of these, each available, on request, to those who have use for them, as they are issued. Some appear daily, others weekly, monthly, quarterly, yearly, or at specific periods when there is a time of activity in that industry, as for example egg hatcheries.

2. The second group of sources includes the bulletins and reports of state agricultural colleges and state departments of agriculture. Whereas the first group of sources are intended for national use, these are designed to be used in a particular state. Workers in the state departments of agriculture as well as those at the agricultural colleges help to assemble some of the data used by the federal department. Then in turn, after the whole bulk of information is digested, the smaller units use in their own bulletins and reports the findings which are of interest to their particular state, adding details of their own.

3. This material, described above, is frequently set up in newspapers and magazines which seek farmer subscriptions. It is usually abridged according to the dictates of the publisher, rather than according to the needs of farmers or the judgment of an agricultural economist.

Commission houses, from which salesmen sell the farmers' produce on commission, combine their own ideas with



facts from the governmental market reports in the form of leaflets or news sheets which they publish and mail to regular customers or to prospective ones. These publications are frequently more informal and less technical than the government reports, and as such are perhaps more widely used.

4. The next group of sources includes the organs and news letters of the cooperative marketing associations, which are generally supplied free of charge to members and to agricultural workers. The information published is a combination of that obtained from the Bureau of Agricultural Economics and that made up by their own staff. Examples of this type of economic information are furnished by the bulletins or news letters sent out by the Michigan Milk Producers, the Michigan Livestock Exchange, and the Michigan Potato Growers Exchange.

5. The radio has provided an entirely new and different method of getting information to the farmer. Most radio stations in the middle west sponsor some type of broadcast of price and market information in an effort to make their daily programs fit the needs of everyone. These particular broadcasts are given mainly during the noon hour and so are available to the farmer while he is in the house during his time off for dinner.

There are several different types of information broadcast. One type is that of broadcasting chosen sections of the market news service reports from a market in the area



served by the radio station. A second type is a discussion directly from the market by some special reporter. The third type is that represented by the Farm and Home Hour, sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture, which includes among other things data about production, home making, etc., and discussions of market reports. Of course stations operated more particularly for farmer listeners, such as the Prairie Farmer station in Chicago, will have more of this sort of broadcast than stations operated more specifically for urban listeners.

The fourth type of broadcast is illustrated by the radio station of Michigan State College at East Lansing which goes by the call letters of W K A R. This station has no favors to ask except its existence, and its broadcasts therefore serve to make more readily available the information personally collected at the college, and to make promptly and directly available the data regarding changing conditions, as, for instance, insect pests and crop diseases.

6. Extension meetings are the only one of these sources whereby the information is carried promptly to the farmer and discussed with him. The outlook information and other material is taken directly to the farmer by the county agricultural agents, sometimes helped by the Smith-Hughes teacher of agriculture, and frequently with the assistance of extension men from the state college. These extension men are specialists in particular fields and are maintained



by the college for this purpose. This system has much to commend it. The farmers all too frequently have a very limited education and so lack the ability to interpret information on their own account; also there is someone, trained in this work, on hand to answer questions and to assist in making an individual application of the information.

Section 2 THE NEED FOR STUDY OF THE FARMERS' REACTIONS

In all of the time that this elaborate system of assembling and disseminating price and market information has been built up, there has been very little attempt to find out the reaction of the farmer to the various types of material available. There have, however, been some very exhaustive studies made regarding the accuracy of the material assembled and the speed at which it was made available. But there is little information to be found as to the type of farmers using the information; which is the most used or desired, long-time or short-time outlooks; when the farmers want such facts or what they do with those they do get.

Recently the need for more accurate information from the farmer himself has been felt more keenly, as indicated by the following quotations from the Central States Regional Outlook Conference: (1)

(1) Report of the Central States Regional Outlook Conference, 1931, page 7.

"We recognize the need of recorded evidence of how economic information has been used by farmers, to the end that this type of extension service may serve their needs more effectively."

"We feel that the aim of the economic extension program should be to reach the great majority of farmers with continuous, timely, economic information in a form that can be readily understood and practically applied to their farm business problems."

Also the following from an address at the Western Regional Outlook Conference:(2)

"A knowledge of the way different classes of farmers 'react' to changes in prices and costs, and to non-economic factors as well, would help outlook workers to see the problem from the standpoint of the farmers they are endeavoring to serve. It would enable them to form a better judgment as to the changes and adjustments that will be practical and feasible on farms of different types. Incidentally, such knowledge would be of considerable help in determining the most effective methods of presenting outlook information to farmers."

Section 3.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

As indicated previously there have been but few studies made regarding the farmers' use of price and market information. Only three could be found; the outline of each of these follows.

1. A study was made of 450 farms and farm homes in Jackson and Menominee counties, Michigan, in 1928, by Wilson
- (2) E.R.Tolley: The History and Objectives of Outlook Work Address at Western Regional Outlook Conference, Salt Lake City, 1931, pagel.

and Baldwin to ascertain the "Extension Results as Influenced by Various Factors". This was primarily to determine the effectiveness of all of the different kinds of extension work and was aimed mainly at production methods rather than at the problems of distribution and marketing. They found that

"improved practices were reported adopted due to extension influences on 80 per cent of the farms and in 24 per cent of the farm homes."

2. Mr. C. J. Borum, State College of Agriculture, Brookings, South Dakota, mailed a questionnaire to the crop reporters to ascertain the effectiveness of their station K F D Y, and also of the South Dakota Farm Outlook.

3. Mr. C. E. Rowland, of the Department of Rural Economics at Ohio State University at Columbus, also mailed a questionnaire to the farmers of Ohio to determine their use of the Ohio Outlook, the papers used to secure economic information, and what additional information was wanted. A little over half of those who replied used the outlook, and also used many of the standard papers.

The first of these inquiries has a distinct advantage, in that the information was obtained by direct contact; but it was concerned with all types of extension work. It is the belief of the writer that the findings are not applicable to the use of price and market information, because much of the service studied concerns production and home making; a questionnaire about these will have a different

1. The first part of the paper is devoted to a general discussion of the problem of the existence of solutions of the system of equations (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β . It is shown that the system (1) has solutions for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β if and only if the condition $\alpha + \beta = 1$ is satisfied.

2. In the second part of the paper the problem of the existence of solutions of the system (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β is solved. It is shown that the system (1) has solutions for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β if and only if the condition $\alpha + \beta = 1$ is satisfied.

3. In the third part of the paper the problem of the existence of solutions of the system (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β is solved. It is shown that the system (1) has solutions for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β if and only if the condition $\alpha + \beta = 1$ is satisfied.

4. In the fourth part of the paper the problem of the existence of solutions of the system (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β is solved. It is shown that the system (1) has solutions for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β if and only if the condition $\alpha + \beta = 1$ is satisfied.

5. In the fifth part of the paper the problem of the existence of solutions of the system (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β is solved. It is shown that the system (1) has solutions for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β if and only if the condition $\alpha + \beta = 1$ is satisfied.

6. In the sixth part of the paper the problem of the existence of solutions of the system (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β is solved. It is shown that the system (1) has solutions for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β if and only if the condition $\alpha + \beta = 1$ is satisfied.

7. In the seventh part of the paper the problem of the existence of solutions of the system (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β is solved. It is shown that the system (1) has solutions for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β if and only if the condition $\alpha + \beta = 1$ is satisfied.

8. In the eighth part of the paper the problem of the existence of solutions of the system (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β is solved. It is shown that the system (1) has solutions for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β if and only if the condition $\alpha + \beta = 1$ is satisfied.

9. In the ninth part of the paper the problem of the existence of solutions of the system (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β is solved. It is shown that the system (1) has solutions for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β if and only if the condition $\alpha + \beta = 1$ is satisfied.

10. In the tenth part of the paper the problem of the existence of solutions of the system (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β is solved. It is shown that the system (1) has solutions for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β if and only if the condition $\alpha + \beta = 1$ is satisfied.

reception than one about prices and markets alone.

The other two studies were based on mailed questionnaires. Although the information sought was similar to that in the present study, many farmers, through suspicion or lack of education, will not answer such questionnaires. These are the very ones who lack the advantages to be gained from intelligent use of price and market information, and at the same time are the individuals who need the most help. This consideration suggested therefore the need for study based on direct contact with farmers and directed especially to ascertaining their responses to the various forms of agricultural economic information.

Section 4. METHODS OF THE PRESENT STUDY

The present study represents an attempt to obtain definite information regarding the actual use of economic information by farmers in a selected area. The area chosen for study was in Calhoun County in which the writer has been a Smith-Hughes teacher for the past five years. The method by which the information for this thesis was assembled was that of a questionnaire carried directly to the farmers and the answers obtained by personal interview.

The questionnaire, a copy of which is included in



the appendix, was set up in an attempt to find out from all of the types of farmers of this locality the effectiveness of the price and market information which is available. To be more specific, the aim was to determine for the area studied the number of farmers who used information, and how the use of this information was influenced by such factors as age of the farmer, time on the farm, ownership or tenancy, attendance at farm meetings, education, organizational and educational contacts of children, and the bearing of such items as the size and condition of the farms, the distance from town, and the types of roads.

The farmers selected for questioning were picked by the sampling method. Mr. Ralph Helm, Calhoun County Agricultural Agent, chose the four townships of Eckford, Homer, Lee, and Fredonia, as being truly representative of the county, in that they collectively contained all of the types of soil present in the county, and also included most of the variations in nationality or financial ability among farmers of the county.

In working a particular township roads were selected which went clear through the township, a good road and a poor one, and then every farmer on those roads was interviewed.



Chapter II

FACTORS AFFECTING FARMERS' USE OF ECONOMIC INFORMATIONSection 1. Character of Area Surveyed

Calhoun County is located in the second tier of counties, north from the southern boundary of Michigan, and is near the center of the state. It also lies just north of the Corn Belt in the area known under the general title of Hay and Dairy region. According to the census figures for April 1, 1930, there were 2437 farms in the county, averaging 109 acres each.

The area was settled mainly with people who migrated westward from New York State, though there were some from New Hampshire and Vermont, with a few Pennsylvania Dutch.

The land is gently rolling, very little being hilly enough to make it difficult to use any farm equipment. The soil is largely a sandy loam, originally forested with hardwood such as oaks, maple, elm, walnut, and others of like nature. The subsoil in most cases is light enough so that it leaches quite readily. The annual average precipitation is 36 inches. The average annual frost free period extends from may tenth to September tenth.

In the greater part of the area studied there is but little variation in the crops raised. Hogs, cattle,



and wheat form the main crops which are sold as cash products. Most of the farms have some oats and corn, but these are raised not for selling but for feeding to livestock. Occasionally there is some barley or rye, with a very few fields of beans. Nearly all farms have some hay, but this also is used as a stock feed. Sheep are distinctly a side line, with dairying but little more common. The onion business is largely new most of the growers in this section having started only recently, much of the muck land being newly broken specially for this purpose. Very few of the farmers raising onions are adequately equipped, either financially or by training, for this specialized occupation. The remaining small farms were either operated on a self-sufficing basis, selling only incidental surplus; or they were devoted to specialized lines.

Section 2. Relation between Size of Farm and Use of Information

In this area there is a wide variation in both the farms and the farmers. The more outstanding of these variations were examined to find their relationship to the number of times the farmers referred to economic information, and to some degree the effectiveness of its use. In the first place a suggestive relationship was found to exist between the size of the farm unit and the use of economic information by farmer occupants.

For the sake of getting the data into tables the



following divisions were used: one to fifty acres; fifty-one to one hundred acres; one hundred to one hundred and sixty acres; and above one hundred and sixty acres. The farms seemed to fall easily into these divisions, largely because of the system of surveying by which the land was originally laid out, namely one hundred and sixty acre grants.

Table I: Use of Price Information by Farmers on Farms of Different Sizes Totalled for the Four Townships

Size	A. Use regularly	B. Use occasionally	C. Do not use	Total number	Per cent		
					A	B	C
1-50	2	2	14	18	.11	.11	.77
51-100	19	4	28	51	.37	.08	.55
101-160	51	6	16	73	.70	.08	.22
161-up	15		3	18	.83		.17

Of the small farms, fifty acres or less, there are eighteen recorded, of which fourteen, or 77 per cent, do not use any price information at all. This is largely due to two reasons: the farms are small with little produce to sell; or they are onion farms whose workers claim that there is no information available relative to the price or marketing of onions.

In the next group of fifty-one to one hundred acres fifty-one farms were visited, of which twenty-eight, or 55 per cent did not use information. The reasons that these farmers do not use information are either like those



above, or else it would appear that farmers with sufficient ability to use and interpret economic data are energetic enough to have larger farms.

The next larger size, one hundred and one to one hundred and sixty acres, showed a better proportion of those using information. Seventy-three farms fell into this group, and fifty-seven of these farmers make some use of the information that is available; 70 per cent use it regularly, and 8 per cent use it occasionally. This shows that over three quarters of these farmers find that the information is of some help to them. There can be two interpretations of this: first that the farmers with the larger farms are better able to use the information; or else that the available information is more suited to their needs than it is to the needs of the worker on the smaller farm.

There were eighteen farms of over one hundred and sixty acres, in the area studied, of which only three do not use some information; only 17 per cent do not use any. This group therefore shows the highest percentage, 83, of use of information and correlates directly in ratio with the previously mentioned groups.

This indicates two methods of approach in order to make the present system of economic information more useful: first to make the information that is now available more easily interpreted(which will be discussed later); and second to adapt it more to the needs of the smaller farm



by fitting it to the specialized crops produced upon them.

Section 3. Relation between Condition of Farm and Use of Information

The items which go to make up this classification are the presence of modern improvements, an adequate supply of farm equipment, fencing, and the general appearance of the farm. Other factors which should be listed specifically are: painting, roofing, condition of the yard, well housed tools, and stock both well kept and adequately housed. Only a few of all the farms visited are equipped with electricity and running water.

Road conditions are not considered in making this classification. Most of the farms in good condition are on good roads, as are also many of those in poor condition. At the same time many farms in very good condition are on back roads, and either came as a heritage or were purchased specifically to provide solitude.

Table II: The Relation between Condition of the Farm and the Use of Information Totalled for the Four Townships

Grades	A.Use	B.Use	C.Do not	Total	Per cent		
	regularly	occasionally	use	number	A	B	C
Poor	15	6	38	59	.25	.10	.64
Fair	23	4	14	41	.56	.09	.34
Good	34	1	10	45	.75	.02	.22
Very good	15			15	100		

There are fifty-nine farms which are classified in the poor condition group, and of these only fifteen, or one quarter, use much information. Of the forty-one farms classed as in fair condition, twenty-three use information regularly, or 56 per cent, which is slightly over half. There are forty-five farms classed in good condition and thirty-four, or 75 per cent, use information regularly. Of the fifteen farms in the very good group, all use information regularly, or 100 per cent.

The condition of a farm is quite readily controllable by the farmer, rather than controlling and influencing him as might be the case with farm acreage. The deduction that should be made from this classification is that the economic information has a greater appeal and is found to be more useful by the farmer with higher standards.

Section 4. Status of Farmers' Tenure

Consideration was given as to whether the status of farmers as owners or tenants had any bearing on their use of price information. The survey revealed the following situation:

Table III: The Use of Price Information by Tenants and Owners

	A. Use regularly	B. Use occasionally	C. Do not use	Total number	Per cent A	Per cent B	Per cent C
Tenant	20	1	15	36	.55	.03	.41
Owner	67	10	46	123	.54	.08	.37



Of thirty-six tenants, or almost one fourth of the farmers questioned, 41 per cent did not use any information and 56 per cent made regular use of it. Of the one hundred and twenty-three owners, 54 per cent used information regularly, 8 per cent part of the time, and 37 per cent not at all. One farmer stood alone as a manager. The ratio of farm owners using information is only slightly higher than that for tenants. It would seem then that in assembling any information no great amount of attention need be paid to the problem of whether or not the recipient will be a tenant or an owner.

Section 5. Length of farmers' occupancy

The length of time spent by the farmer occupying the present farm, either as owner or tenant, was found to have a direct relationship with his use of market information.

Table IV: The Use of Price Information by Farmers as Influenced by Length of Occupancy

Time on A. Use present farm	regularly	B. Use occasionally	C. Do not use	Total number	Per cent		
					A	B	C
1-5 years	19		26	45	.42	.58	
6-10 "	15	2	5	22	.68	.09	.22
11-24 "	31	3	13	47	.68	.06	.26
25-life	22	6	18	46	.47	.13	.39



The first group includes those who are on farms because of the current unemployment situation; it also includes the poor grade of tenants who are constantly shifting from farm to farm. These farmers have very little interest in the long-time planning of farm production, and in the area studied such farmers constitute approximately one fourth of the total number. Some of these of course will stay on or acquire farms of their own and have to be put into other groupings. The point to be emphasized is that, even with some deductions for those who will be permanent farmers, there will still exist a large percentage who have no interest in long-time information regardless of how attractive it might be made. Or rather, to state it in another way, there is a definite group to whom only the short-time data is of any value.

Of this first group of forty-five, 42 per cent use information and 58 per cent do not. There are twenty-two farmers who have lived on the same farm from six to ten years. Of these fifteen use information regularly, two a little, and five never. There are forty-seven farmers in the division of eleven to twenty-four years on the same farm; of these 68 per cent use information regularly, 6 per cent occasionally, and 26 per cent not at all. In the group of twenty-five years to their entire life spent on the particular farm, there are forty-six farmers. Of these twenty-two, or 47 per cent, use information regularly; six

or 13 per cent, use it part of the time; eighteen, or 39 per cent, not at all.

Section 6. Age of Farmer

By far the largest number of farmers have been in that occupation for life. They grew up on farms and after school returned directly to farming, or at most spent a few years in some other occupation and then went back when the "old folks" were getting too old to work the farm by themselves. For the sake of tabulation the various ages are divided into ten year periods, starting at thirty years.

Table V: Use of Price Information by Farmers of Different Ages

Age	A.Use regularly	B.Use occasionally	C.Do not use	Total number	Per cent A	B	C
30-39	9		9	18	.50		.50
40-49	34	3	15	52	.65	.06	.29
50-59	33	3	21	57	.57	.05	.37
60-69	6	5	7	18	.33	.27	.40
Over 69	5		10	15	.33		.77

There are eighteen farmers in the youngest division, from thirty to thirty-nine years of age, who are divided equally with half using and the other half not using information. There are a number of reasons why 50 per cent do not use it. Some are "one crop" onion farmers who claim

that they would gladly use data if any were available. Several are younger farmers that are doing without radio and papers as an economy measure. Some lack sufficient training or ambition to interpret the material now available.

Fifty-two farmers were between the ages of forty and forty-nine. Of these there are only fifteen, or 29 per cent, who do not use any information. The reasons for their not using it are similar to those above, eight having onion farms and seven being without sufficient education or ambition.

In the age group of fifty to fifty-nine the proportion of those using information descends to 57 per cent.

Among the eighteen farmers sixty to sixty-nine years old the proportion does not change greatly. Seven, or 40 per cent, do not use information; six, or 33 per cent, use it regularly; and five, or 27 per cent, use it occasionally.

In the oldest group, namely over sixty-nine, the ratio changes toward a lesser use. Of the fifteen interviewed only five, or one third, use information.

To sum up the findings for all ages we find that eighty-seven, or a little over half, use information quite regularly, eleven use it part of the time, and sixty-two do not make any use of it. Together with other means of measuring,

which are discussed more fully later on, it appears that those in the lower age brackets who do not use price information generally belong to that unfortunate group of misfits who grew up in farming and continue at it for no better reasons than that they have neither the training nor the "push" to get into some other occupation. Among those in the older age brackets who do not use information are some who might have learned to use it if they had grown up with it, but the expansion of the information has been brought about since they have become "set" in their ways and they find it hard to change.

The two age brackets including the ages from forty to fifty-nine gave the most favorable reaction to the use of information. Many of these farmers have recently acquired farms of their own, frequently with heavy debts, and are willing to accept anything that will give the least hope of a better return for their investment and labor. The younger farmers have not the responsibility of ownership, while those in the older groups are not inclined favorably toward new things.

Section 7. Education of Farmers

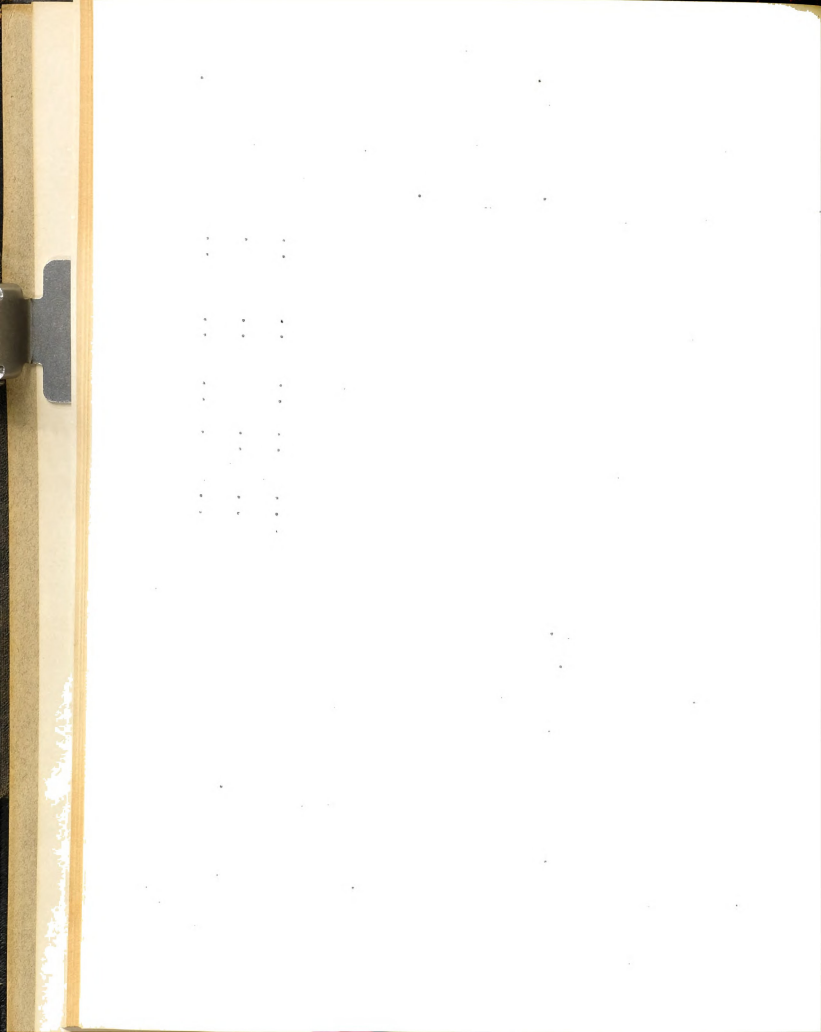
Inquiry as to the relationship between the extent of the formal education of the farmers interviewed and their

use of market information disclosed the following results.

Table VI: The Use of Price Information by Farmers of Different Education

	A.Use regularly	B.Use occasionally	C.Do not use	Total number	Per cent A B C		
Fredonia township							
Grade 8	3	1	19	23	.13	.04	.82
Grade 12	13		2	15	.87		.13
College	2			2	100		
Homer township							
None			2	2			100
Grade 8	4	5	7	16	.25	.31	.44
Grade 12	16	2	2	20	.80	.10	.10
College	2			2	100		
Lee twonship							
Grade 8	6		14	20	.30		.70
Grade 12	13		7	20	.65		.35
Eckford township							
Grade 8	4	2	9	15	.26	.13	.60
Grade 12	24	1		25	.96	.04	
Totals							
None			2	2			100
Grade 8	17	8	49	74	.23	.10	.66
Grade 12	66	3	11	80	.82	.04	.14
College	4			4	100		

There were two who said they had no education and could not even read. Neither of these of course used any information at all. Of those with eighth grade education or less, sixty-seven in all, forty-nine or 66 per cent did not use any information, and seventeen or 23 per cent used it regularly; in other words about two thirds of these were unaffected by any efforts at quoting prices or trends. Eighty farmers had studied in high school; only eleven of these did not use information, which makes at least seven eighths interested in data about their problems. In two townships



four
there were/farmers with some college education who all used
information regularly.

In the whole group there were only nine attempting to farm without training of some kind. One of these had been compelled to retire from office work because of failing eyesight; the others were victims of the present period of widespread unemployment. These people were living under conditions that were far from satisfactory and their efforts were not well directed. The equipment was scanty and of poor quality, and their labors were devoted to one or at best to a very few crops with little or no knowledge of market conditions affecting such crops.

The writer hazards the opinion that if those other farmers who were denied education had had adequate training they would be equally as anxious as the rest to use information. It was observed that those of the eighth grade group who did use information had made a real effort to continue their reading in an attempt to make up for previous lack of opportunity. The foregoing analysis suggests that agricultural economic information needs to be adapted for use by those with limited education.

With the exception of the four farmers who had attended college, none of the group had had any opportunity for formal study of economics. For farmers whose education has not extended beyond high school the principles of

economic changes must be presented in very simple form. For those lacking the high school training it might be possible to get together a sort of "first grade reader series" of economic information, that could be comprehended by people with less schooling. There is another problem connected with this idea, however, because those with the least schooling do the least reading and take the fewest papers. It might very well be though that these could be reached by the radio if the lectures could be made simple enough. An adequate course in economics in high schools may also be desirable.

Great care should be used in simplifying the material presented. There are two possible pitfalls: one is that of making the presentation so childish as not to merit the attention of mature men; the other, much more common now, is the effort to make the material as presented appear appetizing by way of jokes and cartoons. Matters dealing with earning power and investments are serious matters, and when farmers want helpful advice they seldom appeal to a humorist.

Section 8. Use of Market Information by Group as a Whole

Disregarding classification of farms and farmers,

the extent to which market information is used by the one hundred and sixty farmers interviewed in the four townships is shown for the group as a whole in Table VII.

Table VII: Use of Price Information by Group as a Whole

Township	A.Use regularly	B.Use occasionally	C.Do not use	Total number	Per cent		
					A	B	C
Fredonia	18	1	21	40	.45	.02	.52
Homer	22	7	11	40	.55	.17	.27
Lee	19		21	40	.47		.52
Eckford	28	3	9	40	.70	.07	.22
All four	87	11	62	160	.54	.07	.38

The per cent of those not using information does not indicate as great a lack of interest as would appear in just reading the table.

All of the onion growers insisted that they would be only too glad to use information if there were any available. Most of them asked the writer to exert every influence possible to make such information obtainable.

The three truck gardeners in the section visited do not use any of the information which they could obtain because they claim that the prices quoted do not show actual market variations; also that the prices which prevailed on the market yesterday are a very poor indication of what the prices will be today. The cause of this is that the produce offered on the market one day differs greatly from the next

in both quality and quantity, especially quantity. The produce is divided between Battle Creek and Marshall, the greater part going to Battle Creek to sell on the City Market, the part going to Marshall being sold to the stores. When there is a large quantity of one particular thing, it is taken to some larger city market, usually Detroit.

In actual practice the way these growers price their goods is to explore the market when they arrive and find out what others are charging for similar produce. They then set their price the same or a bit higher. If after buying has been going on for a little while they find that they are selling their goods too fast, they raise the price on the goods still unsold. If, on the contrary, it appears that their supply is selling too slowly and that they might have to take some of it home, they will cut the price till the goods move.

There were five roadside markets, none of which has been established very long; not one of these has any permanent policy as to what to sell, how to sell it, or where to get more. They simply raise the customary garden stuff and put it on a stand, frequently with no warning signs, and guess at prices.

There are fifty-four per cent of the whole group who use information regularly, seven per cent occasionally, and only thirty-two per cent who do not use it at all.

Certainly the number using it justifies the existence



and continuance of information; but just as surely the number not reached indicates that more effort should be made to reach those who at present are not receiving the benefits which might be obtained. The farmers who do not use information are those with less than eighth grade education and are in the older age brackets. Of the two, education is the factor of greatest importance. The approach through newspapers, which will be discussed in detail later, could be made more effective and meetings might well be made to draw more.

Chapter III

MEDIA THROUGH WHICH FARMERS RECEIVE ECONOMIC INFORMATION

Section 1. Extension Meetings

Michigan State College has an established system of bringing the most recent information direct to farmers by means of meetings which are arranged by the county agricultural agent or the Smith-Hughes teacher if there is no county agent. A group of farmers is invited to meet at some convenient place to hear the lecture or to see the demonstration as presented by a specialist from the college or by the county agent after training by the specialist.

The subjects taken up at these meetings include both production and marketing problems.

Each phase of agriculture requires a different method of presentation. As this study is concerned with marketing a more detailed description of the presentation of outlook information will be used here as an illustration.

There are annually seven district meetings in Michigan at which a member of the extension division of Michigan State College, Department of Economics, appears to give advance information and a thorough discussion of the material to appear in the "Agricultural Outlook for Michigan". The county agricultural agents of that district are summoned to these meetings. A week or so later each county agent will hold a general meeting of farmers at which one of the members of the extension department will explain the details of the outlook information and how to use it. This gives the county agents two opportunities to hear an explanation of the same material.

After these two meetings the county agents are equipped with a supply of the outlook bulletin, for that particular year, which are to be distributed among interested farmers. With this training and material each agent is to handle his own meetings and deliver his own lectures.

The table shows the attendance at all types of extension meetings as influenced by different factors.

Table VIII: Attendance at Extension Meetings

Attend:	A	B	C	D	Total	Per cent of			
	None	Few	Some	Most		A	B	C	D
As influenced by education									
Grade 8	44	16	10	4	74	.59	.22	.13	.05
Grade 12	11	11	32	26	80	.14	.14	.40	.32
College			2	2	4			.50	.50
As influenced by age									
30-39	4	2	8		14	.28	.14	.56	
40-49	14	6	9	26	55	.25	.11	.16	.47
50-59	15	12	21	9	57	.28	.21	.36	.15
60-69	8	6	3	2	19	.42	.32	.16	.05
Over 69	12	1	2		15	.80	.06	.13	
As influenced by members of family in Smith-Hughes work									
Number	1	4	11	17	33	.03	.12	.33	.51
As influenced by members of family in 4H Club work									
Number		1	1	14	16		.06	.06	.87
As related to the use of market information									
Regular use	5	13	37	32	87	.05	.15	.42	.37
Occasional use	6	2	3		11	.54	.18	.27	
Do not use	47	11	4		62	.75	.18	.06	

An analysis of the types and conditions of farmers who attend extension meetings appears to show a close relationship with other factors. The table shows first the effect of education on attendance; those with the poorest education tend to go less often, while those with high school training are more regular. All with college training are in attendance at every possible meeting.

Thirty-nine farmers stated that they could not interpret the information. In Fredonia there were seventeen, in age from thirty-five to seventy; one had a high school education and the others only eighth grade. Homer township



had seven from the ages of forty to sixty, all with only eighth grade schooling. Lee township had six between the ages of thirty to seventy, also with only eighth grade training. Eckford had nine from the ages of forty-five to seventy, with no more than eighth grade if that much. All this again illustrates the fact that the education factor is very important in determining whether or not the farmer is able to use and does use information.

Age is a real factor in control over attendance at meetings. Between the ages of thirty to thirty-nine three fourths went to some meetings. In the group forty to forty-nine the percentage of attendance at most meetings is 47; in the oldest group 80 per cent do not attend any meetings. In other words the oldest age bracket of seventy up paid little attention to meetings, and the proportion changes quite consistently toward the younger age group of thirty to thirty-nine, among whom the attendance is much more regular.

The farmers who have the weakest education are the ones who seldom attend any meetings and who do not use the informational opportunities which are available. Most of these are found to be in the older age brackets. This last factor probably will not be constant however, because the older men had formed habits before the present sources of information were available. Or to put it in another way, it will very likely be found that those in the younger age

brackets now, who have learned to use information, will in all probability continue to use it when they are older.

The result of having someone in the family with Smith-Hughes agricultural training is very marked. In only one case out of thirty-three such cases did the farmer attend no meetings, while fifty-one per cent reported that they attended most of the extension meetings in their district. The influence of 4H Club work among the farmers' children is even more marked, since of the sixteen in this group there are eighty-seven per cent who attend all possible meetings.

These findings indicate quite clearly: first, that the farmers with better education are more receptive to information which is made available at meetings; second, that those farmers with more education who attend more meetings are among the younger groups; third, that the Smith-Hughes and 4H Club work with the young people apparently influence most of such farmer parents to go to meetings.

There is a very close connection between the use of market information and the attendance at farm meetings. Only 5 per cent of those who use information regularly stay away from gatherings; 15 per cent go to only a few; 42 go to some; 37 per cent attend all possible meetings. On the other hand, of those who reported that they did not make use of market information, 62 per cent did not attend any

meetings, while none of these were found to be attendants at most of the meetings.

From this table then it appears that younger and middle aged farmers with a better grade of education are definitely associated with those who have a connection with Smith-Hughes agricultural work and 4H Club work; and that these are also the same group who attend most of the meetings as well as use information most regularly.

No way appears by which it would be possible to measure which of these conditions has a dominant influence in leading a specific farmer, or a farmer group, into contact with the other conditions. It would rather seem that they were closely interdependent, and that as one is developed the others are needed and desired.

Among the farmers interviewed there appeared to be no picture of the different phases of information which were presented at different meetings, let alone any idea as to whether the information was of long-time or short-time value and usefulness. They stated that certain meetings had been interesting or valuable; or that a particular suggestion might be applied; but as a rule they appeared unable to evaluate the programs as a whole.

The meetings have apparently accomplished their purpose in selling the idea of using information to the farmer; they also seem to have fulfilled the need of getting the farmer to use the information more effectively.

It would then appear that more effort should be made to attract farmers to meetings through better arrangement of the times when such meetings are held, and through use of a better type of invitation.

Section 2. Agricultural Outlook Reports

Information covering phases of acreage, yield, production, and prices, together with other related material is collected by the United States Department of Agriculture, the state crop reporters, and the agricultural colleges, working together. The Agricultural Outlook for Michigan represents an annual compilation of the material which is related to Michigan and is issued as a bulletin designed to guide the farmer in setting up his production program.

Data were collected showing the influence of some prominent factors on the use of this bulletin.

Table IX. The Use of the Agricultural Outlook for Michigan

	Total number	Use Outlook to adjust production	Per cent using Outlook
<u>As influenced by education</u>			
Grade 8	74	4	.05
Grade 12	80	20	.25
College	4	2	.50
<u>As influenced by age</u>			
30-39	14	6	.43
40-49	55	13	.24
50-59	57	6	.10
60-69	19	1	.05
<u>As influenced by the condition of the farm</u>			
Poor	59	2	.03
Fair	41	3	.07
Good	45	14	.31
Very good	15	7	.47
Totals	160	26	.16

Of the one hundred and sixty farmers interviewed only twenty-six use the Outlook. Of that number four have only eighth grade training, twenty have done high school work, and two have a college education. To state it in percentages, only 5 per cent of those with eighth grade education use it, 25 per cent of those with high school, and 50 per cent of those with college; those who use it total 16 per cent of the farmers visited.

In the youngest age bracket 43 per cent use the Outlook. From forty to forty-nine 24 per cent do; from fifty to fifty-nine 10 per cent do; from sixty to sixty-nine only 5 per cent; and over sixty-nine none use it. The age factor therefore has an impressive influence.

On poor farms 3 per cent use it; on fair ones 7 per cent; on good ones 31 per cent; and on very good ones 47 per cent. The condition of the farm plainly reflects its use.

Table X: Attitude of Farmers toward Outlook Material

	Number used	A. Found dependable	B. Wanted oftener	C. Wanted Oct.-Nov.	Per cent of A B C
As influenced by education					
Grade 8	4	4	1	3	100 .25 .75
Grade 12	20	19	5	15	.95 .25 .75
College	2	2	2		100 100

Several conclusions may be drawn from this table.

Over 95 per cent of all farmers using the Outlook found it

dependable; more than a fourth wanted the information in it to use all the year, and the rest needed it most in October and November.

The writer tried very hard to get those who use the Outlook to make some comment on the various sections; which is more valuable, the one they wanted increased, etc., but to no avail. Not one had made any attempt to evaluate the different sections. One statement that appears to be common is that it helps in planning; sixteen of the twenty-six farmers interviewed made this observation; and seven thought that there might be more forecasts, or that the forecasts might be made more specific. The bulletin is apparently read as a complete body of information and no one complained that it is undependable.

Perhaps it would be wise to partition the sections more strikingly so that one section would be read and thought over before the next one is started. The county agents with whom the writer has talked seem to have a none too clear idea as to trends. They remember and use a fact that a certain leading crop or two is "so many bushels short", or that another crop has "so many acres increase planted over a year ago". Even then they appear to entertain some doubts as to the accuracy of the figures. This condition the writer ascribes not to the fault of any one but simply to a lack of proper economic background on the part of the county agent.

A more effective method of distribution should be adopted in order to secure for more farmers the benefits which can be obtained from studying the Outlook. The meetings at which the bulletin is explained come rather late. In this section the seasons crops are being planted and some other spring work is already begun. This militates against attendance at meetings and against active interest in the information which is presented. Greater distribution could be obtained by breaking the whole body of information up into sections and then presenting these in the areas interested in that particular crop or product, using ready set up material for publication by local papers. This is described more fully later on.

Section 3. Michigan State College Radio Broadcasts

The radio station W K A R at East Lansing broadcasts intermittently through the daytime. The programs are designed to bring, directly following the twelve oclock time signals, the daily weather reports and the market situation. This is usually followed with a lecture by one of the faculty of the college discussing some timely agricultural problem. Later in the afternoon the station comes on the air again with lectures or episodes planned to assist the farm housewife with her housekeeping problems.

These are sometimes altered by introducing lecturers speaking on problems of interest to the housewife but perhaps outside of the home.

The radio being the newest means by which information may be carried directly to an individual, it presented an interesting study in measuring the effect of certain factors on its use.

Table XI: Use of the Radio

	Number of farmers	Own radio Number	Per cent	Dial WKAR Number	regularly Per cent
In relation to farmer education					
Grade 8	74	24	.32	19	.79
Grade 12	80	54	.68	54	100
College	4	4	100	4	100
In relation to age of farmer					
30-39	14	8	.60	8	100
40-49	55	31	.56	29	.94
50-59	57	26	.46	26	100
60-69	19	9	.47	9	100
Over 69	15	6	.40	6	100
In relation to the condition of the farm					
Poor	59	18	.31	18	100
Fair	39	20	.51	20	100
Good	47	32	.68	30	.94
Very good	13	10	.80	10	100

Only 32 per cent of those with an eighth grade education owned a radio; of these but 79 per cent used W K A R. Those with high school training were not quite equally divided in ownership of a radio for 68 per cent possessed one; 100 per cent of these tuned in on W K A R often. Again it is clear that those with a little better



education are more receptive of information.

Examination of the table for ages shows that the percentage decreases as the age increases; from thirty to thirty-nine 60 per cent own radios while in the bracket above sixty-nine only 40 per cent own them. Almost all owners tune in on W K A R.

The farm conditions bear the relationship to the use of radio that one would expect. Only 31 per cent of those on poor farms own a radio; this percentage increases through the fair and good farms until with the very good ones 80 per cent have a radio.

Of the eighty who own a radio, seventy-four, or nearly the entire number, want the information so they can adjust their marketing and production programs. They are very complimentary of W K A R, and made it plain that dialing that station at noon was a ritual with them. In asking what they tuned in for the reply with small variation is weather and markets. No one of his own volition made any comments about the lectures following weather and markets. When asked about these lectures some replied that they tuned them out; others were very hazy about them. No lectures on either production or distribution had made enough of an impression to be remembered.

All this does not apply in the summer time for then those with radios do not make much attempt to use them. There is too much static, the days spent in the fields are

too long, and when the farmers do come in they are too tired to make any effort to enjoy or to profit from a radio.

There were six who reported the East Lansing station is hard to get; from conversation with them the writer judged that those machines have some defect. Most of the farmers were complimentary and several seemed a bit worried lest this study would result in the market and weather broadcasts being discontinued.

To sum up then, it appears that the programs are more acceptable to farmers who have a high school education, or better, and are interested in keeping their farms in good order. Perhaps with more discussion of what market prices and their changes mean, an interpretation for those with less schooling, the programs would have a wider appeal. This would require the daily attention of someone trained in analysing prices to add some comment to the bare recital of prices. However it is probably impossible to build programs pleasing to everyone.

Three asked if it would be possible to have programs at night for their benefit to correspond to those in the afternoon for farm women. It appeared from their hazy ideas about the other phases of the noon broadcasts that they come into the house at noon, dial W K A R for the weather and markets while the last few finishing touches are being added to the table, then while they are at the table either tune in for some music or merely disregard the

lectures.

Section 4. Newspapers

Most newspapers which have any very extensive list of farmer subscribers include some quotations regarding the current market conditions. This, combined with the many other services which are offered, makes the newspaper a most attractive means by which the farmer may secure the information which he desires.

Table XII: News Channels through which Calhoun County Farmers Receive Price Quotations

Name	Type	Total number
Marshall Evening Chronicle	Daily	46
Battle Creek Moon Journal	"	26
Jackson Patriot	"	22
Battle Creek Enquirer News	"	5
Detroit Free Press	"	5
Detroit News	"	2
Toledo Blade	"	2
Chicago Tribune	"	1
Lansing State Journal	"	1
Michigan Farmer	Weekly	18
National Livestock Association	Special	1

There are nine different dailies received by one hundred and ten subscribers; one hundred and four families have at least one daily. Eighteen families have the Michigan Farmer; four of these have no daily. The family which has the report of the National Livestock Association also has

two daily papers and the Outlook for Michigan, and their farm is in excellent condition.

Table XIII: Use of Newspapers for Market Information

	Total number	A.Do use	B.For market news	C.To adjust production	Per cent of A.	B.	C.
In relation to education							
Grade 8	74	41	41	19	.55	100	.46
Grade 12	80	63	63	59	.778	100	.94
College	4	4	4	4	100	100	100
In relation to farmers age							
30-39	14	11	11	9	.78	100	.82
40-49	55	35	35	32	.64	100	.90
50-59	57	43	43	32	.75	100	.74
60-69	19	14	14	5	.73	100	.36
Over 69	15	5	5	4	.33	100	.80
In relation to condition of the farm							
Poor	59	25	25	12	.42	100	.50
Fair	41	33	33	23	.80	100	.70
Good	45	37	37	34	.82	100	.92
Very good	15	13	13	13	.90	100	100

The percentage of those with only eighth grade training who take papers is 55; of these 46 per cent use it to adjust production. Of eighty with a high school education 78 per cent take papers; 94 per cent of these use it to plan production. Those with a college education all take papers and state that they use the information to adjust production as well as for prices.

It appears then that those with the better education make a greater use of the information because they are able



to read and interpret to a better advantage. Of this grouping the less well educated want their information especially in October and November; the others desire it all the time.

The age factor in relation to the use of papers is quite interesting. In the youngest grouping 78 per cent use papers and regulate production accordingly. From forty to forty-nine only 64 per cent use papers, and of these 90 per cent rely on them to adjust production. Of the group fifty to fifty-nine three fourths consult papers for market information, and 74 per cent plan production by them. In the bracket sixty to sixty-nine 73 per cent use them, and 36 per cent regulate production by them. Over sixty-nine only 33 per cent use them but 80 per cent of these adjust production by them.

Among those classed as poor farmers we find merely 42 per cent using papers, one half of whom plan production by them. On the fair farms 80 per cent of the farmers use papers and 70 per cent consult them about production. All of the 82 per cent of the farmers on good farms who use papers rely on this information. In the group on very good farms 90 per cent use papers and find them helpful with adjusting production. On the poor and the fair farms the information was desired mostly in October and November, but on the others it was felt to be needed all the year round.

To total the foregoing: there are one hundred and

eight farmers who use newspaper information; eighty-two use it to adjust production as well as to find the prices that their produce will bring when they get it to market; fifty are mainly interested in information in October and November.

The conclusions to be drawn from these tables are that the farmers of a high school education or better, between the ages of forty to sixty and on farms that are in better condition use the information to greater advantage and use more of it. They also use it the year round; but the time which seems to all farmers the most important to have information is October and November. During the summer very few farmers do a great deal of reading; the days in the field are too long and too hard. In the fall when the days are shorter and the dark occurs soon after supper time they begin to read again. The problems connected with last summer's crops are still fresh; there is great interest in what will happen to their produce in the market; they plan what they will do the next summer. The time for detailed planning on the farm may be in January and later, but the original ideas of what to do occur to the farmer in the fall period; These are pondered over and assume form in the early spring.

There were a number of suggestions made. One is that the prices quoted in the produce market for market garden stuff should be more complete. Many of the farmers

severely criticize the papers for charging the same subscription rates as they did during war times; papers were one thing which they felt they could do without and still not materially affect their life on the farm. Several of the farmers liked the Michigan Farmer and bewailed the fact that it had been necessary to cut its publication in half so that it came only once in two weeks, making the market reports in it too late to be of much value. The same criticisms of price quotations as before were given, that only the top prices are quoted and it is impossible for the average farmer who is not producing top grade stuff to know what his produce should be worth on the market.

One thing which should not be overlooked in a study of this kind is the fact that farming is made up of such a large number of specialized units. Many farmers are good producers, or good producers of a particular thing, but the number of those who are well acquainted with marketing methods and problems is relatively small.

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Chapter IV

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Section 1. Bringing the United States Department of Agriculture Market News Service to Farmers

It would seem advisable to bring the stenciled reports of the Market News Service more to the attention of farmers. None of the farmers interviewed have any idea of the possibility of obtaining such information. This would help reach those who have no radio and also do not take any paper. It would also tend to answer the complaint that neither the papers nor the radio have enough detailed information regarding the various grades of livestock and the different markets.

As a means of bringing these directly to the attention of the farmer, with a minimum of labor and expense, the following is suggested. That an area served by a particular publication be divided into sections, say fifty-two divisions, or one for each week. In that week those who might be interested in that report would receive it free. If names cannot be obtained from the county agricultural agent, Rural Free Delivery box numbers will do. With the last

issue of that week inclose a card similar to those sent around for revising the mailing list. At the beginning of the next week attack another section. It may be that there are weeks of overload and weeks of slack time in the office; this plan could be adjusted to absorb such slack. It may also be that one fifty-second of a proposed area is too large to approach at one time.

Perhaps samples of the reports could be shown by the county agent at various farm meetings; in any case the farmer who can use the detailed information should at least know it is available.

Section 2. Diffusion of Outlook Information

The Outlook and the information which it carries may be brought very close to the individual farmer by the county agricultural agents. The bulk of information that these county agents are supposed to be able to carry usually precludes a very efficient knowledge of economics. It is suggested as an aid to them that the information that is assembled for the Outlook be set up on what is known as film strips. The charts and the accompanying text could be assembled with very little trouble. The lanterns for projecting this material are the smallest, the cheapest, and the easiest to handle of any of the projection lanterns. The cost

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should be very moderate. Most of the material made up by the United States Department of Agriculture at Washington on slides is now available on film strips. On an average there are about fifty pictures to the set and these made under government contract are for sale at twenty to thirty cents a strip. Such material can be made up by any well equipped photographer from the material as it is assembled and then could be distributed to each county agent, circulated among them on a circuit or made available on request, to be returned after being used. This latter scheme would also make an opportunity open for Smith-Hughes teachers who are often called to address farmer meetings and frequently are at a loss for time to prepare an adequate speech. The film strips are of much shorter life than slides but as this material will be out of date in six months that need present no problem.

The material could be assembled for a particular section, by someone really trained in outlook work, to include all of the facts necessary to completely cover a special group of products. It is also earnestly suggested if such a scheme can be adopted that a short preface be made up for each film strip to show to the untrained how the outlook information is collected and digested and carefully checked to insure accuracy.

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The outlook material could also secure a wider distribution through the already established medium of newspapers. This material could be broken up into sections and made available for printing in the rural papers.

There are two ways in which this could be done; by "mattes", or by plates. The mattes are cardboard impressions of some serial story or cartoon, shipped from a newspaper syndicate to a local paper. Here the paper's typemen pour the forms on the cardboard to make the plate to print from. This system apparently works better on a rotary press such as is used by the larger papers. This is largely due to the technical efficiency of such men and equipment. Plates are the forms set up in metal ready to use. A local source is the Western Newspaper Union at High Street and Grand River in Detroit, who supply this type of thing for the small rural weeklies at two dollars and a half for a seven column page. This compares favorably in price with the other method which sells at a rate of two cents per square inch. (Matte sample may be found in the pocket of this book).

In conversation with editors of papers which have a truly rural circulation it appears that they would welcome such material of real use to farmer subscribers in place of the so-called "boiler-plate" which has no special appeal to agriculturally minded people.

Either or both of these methods would secure a

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wider distribution of the information, would avoid errors of typesetting, and would do away with the misinterpretation and garbling by reporters and editors without an economic background.

Neither of these methods should be very expensive. If the present material can be assembled, the authors paid, copyrights paid, and a profit gleaned at the rates quoted, it would mean that the actual expense of making mattes or plates must be very low.

Many of the farmers have a limited amount of schooling and accordingly do not read understandingly. It would seem advisable from this standpoint to get as much of the information as possible into graph or picture form.

At present the information in the Outlook comes to the farmer very late in February or March when there are which are needed for outdoor work and days when he has already made most of his plans for the year.

It is suggested that the material be made available in October or November. A very large number of the farmers were especially interested in having information then, and the memories of last season are still fresh; also the plans for the next season are not started. If such information were available then the farmer would be able to go over it in the long winter evenings before he has made his plans.

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The farmer has no comprehension of an index number or a graph made of indices. Such information should be made direct and then if thought advisable associated with the suitable index.

Education is the most important factor in determining the use of price and market information. It seems then that the study of economics should have a greater emphasis in high schools. Probably there is no place in the present curriculum for any treatment of economics below high school, and as yet there is no economic information rudimentary enough to be used in the grades,

Section 3. Radio Programs

With radio programs little need be added during the summer work period. The days afield are too long and too strenuous, so that the farmer finds little time or energy to devote to radio problems. Written material may be saved for Sunday or rainy day reading as radio reports cannot be. However as soon as the rush of harvest is over in the fall, there is more time both at noon and in the rapidly lengthening evenings. The farmer is vitally interested in price trends at this time and there is an accumulated interest also from all summer, so that he

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wants both market and production trends and information. Of the whole year the one time that stood out, when the writer was questioning the farmers, as the time during which they particularly liked to have price and market quotations was October and November. During this time also they are beginning to formulate plans for the next season.

The radio is used by farmers of all ages and of all degrees of education who usually are lacking in any background of economics. For which reasons it seems desirable to include with the current daily market reports a short, simple discussion explaining their application; that is how to apply some market change to a particular problem.

Several of the farmers asked if it were not possible to have some programs in the evening that would fit their needs as the afternoon lectures fit the needs of the farm housewife. As they get radio now it appears that they come in at noon and dial W K A R while the last finishing touches are being applied to the table. In this time they listen to the weather and markets announcements, then they go to the table and the distraction of eating and conversation obliterate anything that may follow over the radio. In fact many tune in after the weather and markets for some music that may be enjoyed without too close attention.

The practice of listening to the radio at breakfast

time seems to be increasing, particularly for the weather reports by which the day's work is planned. Another habit is to listen to the stock prices at the close of day and if the market conditions seem favorable to load the truck and arrive on the Detroit market the next morning.

Because of radio congestion probably little can be added in an afternoon or evening broadcast, but the morning hour presents an opportunity to reach the farmer before he starts his daily work and before he is tired.

Another suggestion was contributed at one of the Battle Creek banks where the man in charge of loans had heard of a scheme whereby the local telephone company had a general ring for the whole party line as a weather call and at the same time read off the price information of the day. It is an idea but does not appeal to the writer because of possible irregularity of the calls and of misinterpretation by the telephone operators.

Section 4. Extension Meeting Programs

The extension meetings offer an opportunity to present the newest and best of any agricultural information directly to the farmers. There is an added advantage through demonstration and the chance to apply the information

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to individual cases. This type of presentation will reach the comparatively illiterate who read poorly. There is also a very direct relationship between the attendance at extension meetings and the use of market information.

The first suggestion is that the invitation be made more attractive. So often it is merely a notice in the paper or a perfunctory card. Mostly the farmers who now attend the meetings are those who are the easiest to bring together. If possible the title of the meeting should be made to appear more interesting and the card or other notice be made to sound more personal. Individual invitations would also achieve greater attention. Perhaps this could be handled through district leaders by whom personal invitations could be issued.

The meetings could also have more emphasis on good fellowship. The program need not be just an entertainment to achieve this, but it does need planning.

One factor that keeps farmers from meetings is that they occur when there is necessary work to be done. The writer believes that this factor has not had sufficient attention. It has been more a matter of securing a speaker when he is available and with a hasty invitation collecting as many farmers as could come at that time. The late fall and winter months present the greatest opportunities.

An idea which would require much work and planning is a sort of winter Chautauqua. Consolidate the

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extension talks for both marketing and production into a definite series of programs which would move in a well planned circuit completely covering a specific district at one trip. Have the distances so gauged as to allow the same speaker to repeat his talk four or five times in an afternoon and evening.

First, such a system would make it possible to secure much better publicity by reaching a far greater number of farmers with a less proportional expense per lecture than is the case now.

Second, it should make it possible for a lecturer to cover an area at a minimum of expense with little or no driving back and forth for each talk as must be done now.

As a means of making the programs more attractive it would perhaps be possible to have a few students from the music department take part in them. By taking a few musicians for a few days and then changing, a large number would be given the practice of public appearance without interfering seriously with their class work. This would be particularly true if the programs were made up to occupy the convenient days for farmers, Friday and Saturday. Perhaps in some cases this could be combined with the 4H Club Achievement Day.

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SUMMARY

The study is based on one hundred and sixty farms selected as being representative of the area.

Economic information is found at present to be used mostly by farmers:

- (a) occupying farms of one hundred acres or more.
- (b) whose farms are best equipped and kept in the best condition.
- (c) occupying one farm more than five years and less than twenty-five.
- (d) whose age ranges between forty and sixty years.
- (e) who have a high school education or better.
- (f) who attend most of the extension meetings.
- (g) having a member of the family in Smith-Hughes or 4H Club work.

Half of the farmers have a radio, but most of these are battery sets.

The Agricultural Outlook for Michigan is mostly used on the better types of farms by farmers between forty and sixty years of age.

Farmers do not evaluate the different parts of the Outlook report.

Farmers are most interested in obtaining information during October and November.

Newspapers are received by over two thirds of the farmers; those who make the greatest use of market information are the ones who have a high school education or better, between the ages of forty and sixty, the farms they occupy being in good condition.

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Nationality

Age

Condition of
farm

Acres

Condition of
roads

Distance from
town

Attitude
toward
information

Attendance at
extension
meetings

Smith-Hughes

4H Club

Owner or
tenant

Education

Time spent
on farm



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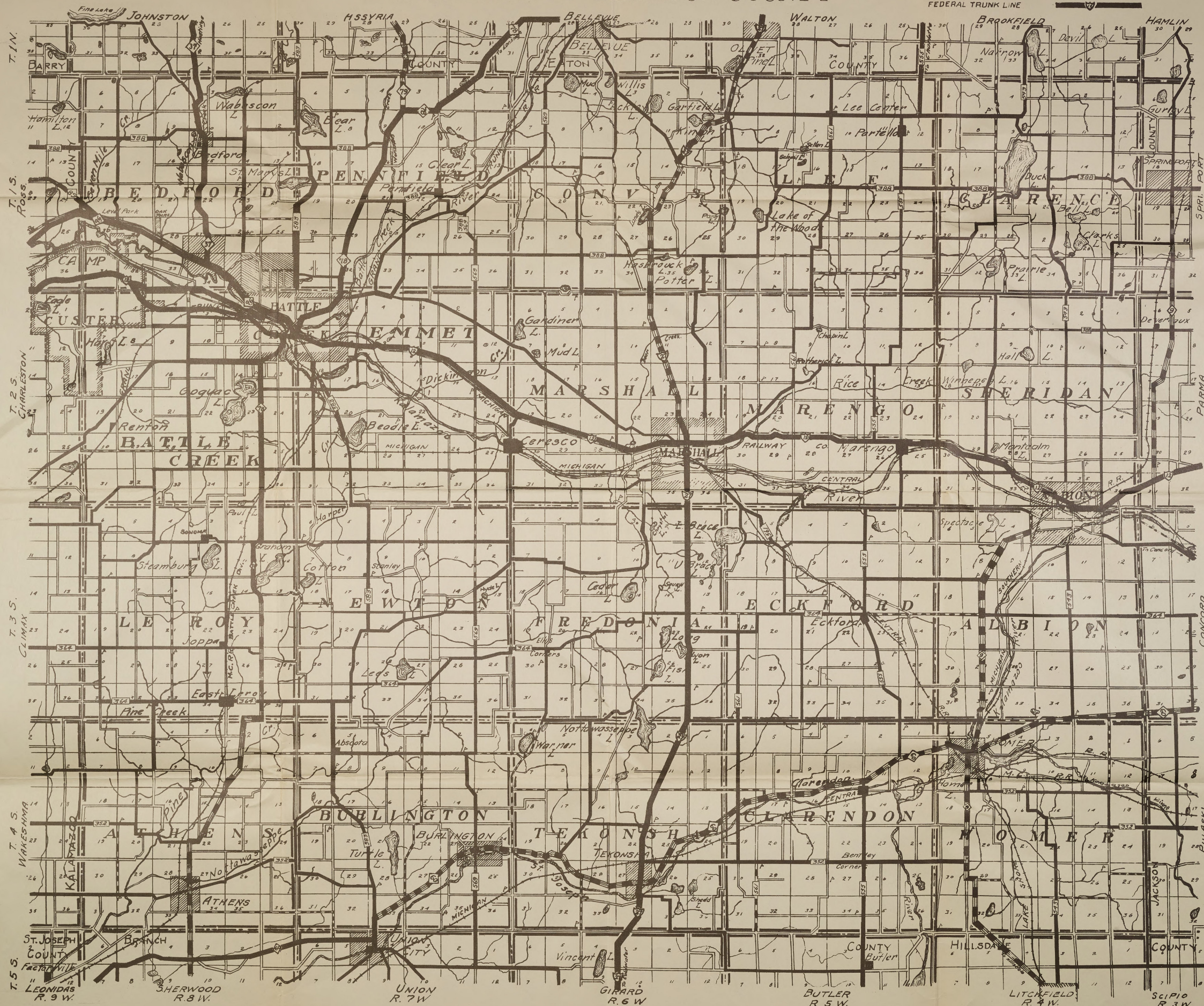
Jun 21 '30

COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION

JAMES KICK
FRANK MAHRLE
E.H. PUFFER
ROY M. HODGES - ENGINEER.

ROAD MAP OF CALHOUN COUNTY

LEGEND	
STATE TRUNK LINE	PAVEMENT
STATE TRUNK LINE	GRAVEL
COUNTY SYSTEM ROAD	PAVEMENT
COUNTY SYSTEM ROAD	GRAVEL
COUNTY SYSTEM ROAD	UN-IMPROVED
TOWNSHIP ROAD	
FEDERAL TRUNK LINE	



SCALE 0 1/2 1 MILE

DRAWN BY ROY M. HODGES
VICTOR D. CAMP - MARCH 1924
CORRECTED - 4-1-30

Taken from the "Annual Farm Business Report for 1931" Farm Management Department

TYPE OF FARMING AREAS IN MICHIGAN

This report for Area 11A (Shaded)

POTATOES AND CATTLE



1. Dairying
2. Corn and Livestock
3. Small Grains and Livestock
4. Dairying and Poultry
5. General Farming
6. Dairying and Potatoes
7. Cattle, Beans and Hay

8. Beans, Beets and Dairying
9. Cattle, Sheep and Forage
10. Forage and Forestry
- 11A&B-Potatoes and Cattle
- 12A&B-Fruit
13. Cattle and Forage
14. Cattle, Forage and Potatoes

Comparison of Number of Farm Accounts and Average Operator's Labor and Management Wage* by Counties for Farm Accounting Project, Michigan-1929, 1930, and 1931.

County	1929		1930		1931	
	No. Farms	Av. Oper's. L.&Mgt. Wage	No. Farms	Av. Oper's. L.&Mgt. Wage	No. Farms	Av. Oper's. L.&Mgt. Wage
1 Allegan	8	\$ 380	10	\$ 106	14	\$ -661
2 Alpena	7	47	8	31	6	-158
3 Antrim	21	871	32	-260	41	-424
4 Barry	9	-55	19	-501	22	-908
5 Bay	9	-161	10	167	13	-978
6 Berrien	--	---	--	---	8	-990
7 Branch	4	126	14	-424	33	-442
8 Cass	20	353	17	-140	24	-947
9 Charlevoix	25	999	36	115	47	-388
10 Chippewa	4	905	17	240	16	-555
11 Clare	6	281	9	-499	7	-877
12 Clinton	13	660	34	-568	31	-833
13 Dickinson	6	-7	3	434	7	-582
14 Eaton	11	837	45	-96	39	-773
15 Emmet	--	---	--	---	19	0
16 Genesee	23	236	35	-580	27	-952
17 Gratiot	13	907	13	-367	21	-1,074
18 Huron	8	472	11	-140	12	-687
19 Ingham	23	390	28	-344	29	-933
20 Jackson	--	---	--	---	18	-467
21 Kalamazoo	14	608	25	-66	27	-1,159
22 Kent	26	906	49	-52	55	-439
23 Livingston	21	423	21	-889	18	-1,104
24 Macomb	8	377	9	-210	13	-716
25 Manistee	7	-43	8	-88	12	-484
26 Mecosta	--	---	--	---	18	-382
27 Menominee	10	1,316	11	-450	13	-268
28 Midland	11	490	7	-136	12	-912
29 Muskegon	8	418	5	-1,143	6	-454
30 Newaygo	14	505	18	-86	27	-278
31 Oakland	17	592	18	600	18	-678
32 Oceana	18	450	26	340	24	-672
33 Ogemaw	16	360	16	-100	24	-248
34 Ontonagon	3	-23	4	-195	1	-335
35 Otsego	7	1,669	6	-157	22	-551
36 Ottawa	14	571	19	-277	23	-291
37 Saginaw	24	406	34	-184	29	-652
38 Sanilac	20	880	24	746	22	-627
39 Schoolcraft	--	---	5	-186	5	-121
40 St. Clair	9	434	14	-176	12	-471
41 Tuscola	14	560	17	4	16	-517
42 Van Buren	--	---	13	8	21	-550
43 Washtenaw	10	501	22	-318	26	-848
44 Wexford	5	-20	23	-280	21	-682
Total number records	486		735		899	
Av. Oper. L. & Mgt. Wage		\$ 544		\$ -160		\$ -619

*This is the return to the operator after five per cent interest on the total investment, all decreases in inventory, family help at hired man wage rates and the cash cost of board furnished hired help, as well as the cash expenses chargeable to the year's business have been deducted from the total farm income which consists of the cash receipts and all increases in inventory. In addition the farm produced some products which were retained for home consumption. The investment in the residence and the expense for its upkeep are not included as part of the farm business. Therefore, no credit is given the farm for the rental value of the dwelling.

Pocket hcs:
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