

FARMERS' GOVERNMENT FARM PROGRAM PREFERENCES
AND RELATED SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

By

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PREFACE

Research reported in this thesis was a joint project administered by the Oklahoma Agricultural Experiment Station and the United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, entitled "Comparative Efficiency of Selected Voluntary Control Programs in the Use of Government Funds to Reduce Farm Production." This thesis is an analysis of farmers' characteristics associated with program preference and farmers' comments about present programs.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Perplexity

Formulating government policy to meet the dynamic needs of the United States and world food economics is a continuing task of government leaders. Programs formulated to deal with farm problems have repercussions for the entire nation.

Policy formulation, according to Don Paarlberg, involves weighing three considerations or disciplines: ethics, politics, and economics-- and only when a proposal is accepted by all three disciplines will policy making experience smooth sailing. Mandatory programs which increase farm income through the market by lowering volume result in higher food prices and reduced freedom for farmers to make their own production decisions. Free markets increase market volume, increase farmer freedom, lower food prices, and result in decreased government cost. No farm program simultaneously increases farm income, lowers consumer food costs, and keeps government cost low.

Since the late 1950's, competition for funds between agricultural expenditures and other government expenditures has increased. Difficulties in formulating and legislating farm programs have been accentuated by increased disagreement between major farm organizations. Even one commodity organization may split its position between different

production areas of the country. This disagreement both among and within farm organizations has diminished the legislative power wielded by farmers.

Today's farm policy is not perfect. We must continue to progress. But to do so, we must evaluate our policy in terms of what is today--not what it was--and within the realm of the situation confronting us today--not what it was.¹

One way to begin to improve programs is with a study of opinions of farmers in light of nonfarm interests. Tweeten suggests certain guidelines for farm interest groups who attempt to influence policy.²

Farmers need to stress the fact that several aspects of farm commodity programs are in the interest of nonfarmers. In some instances, it may be necessary to reformulate or change the objectives of farm programs to place them more nearly in the national interest. The following aspects of farm programs are consistent with the objective of urban-industrial society and should be stressed. Past programs have not reduced efficiency in agriculture, they have helped to maintain a useful strategic reserve, and they have given potential supply flexibility that a free market would not have provided. It is not farfetched to contend that commodity programs are a price which society pays for an atomistic farm structure. That is, the absence of commodity programs would eventually lead to successful efforts of farmers to form effective bargaining groups to raise domestic food prices, and to entail a social cost from reduced marketings that would be greater than the social cost of current programs. In addition to emphasizing such goals as flexibility, strategic reserves, stable food prices and efficiency that are in the interests of nonfarmers, commodity programs should make efforts to hold down the federal cost, avoid undue contribution to income inequality (base acreage withdrawal on a hard-headed quid pro quo basis), and streamline the efficiency with which programs are administered. While pressure groups and political in fighting may be operational framework within

¹Francis A. Kutish, "Current U. S. Farm Policy Issues," Increasing Understanding of Public Problems and Policies (Chicago: Farm Foundation, 1968), p. 130.

²Luther G. Tweeten, "Objectives and Goals for Farm Commodity Programs 1969," Abundance and Uncertainty: Farm Policy Problems, CAED Report 31 (Ames: Iowa State University of Science and Technology, 1968), p. 167.

which farm programs are made, still what political punch farmers can muster will go farthest if managed within the context of a favorable image of agriculture and farm programs that are in the interests of nonfarmers as well as farmers.

Only a few of the realities of obtaining meaningful farm programs have been discussed above. Tweeten, Carr, and Allen have summarized opinions of those who oppose farm programs.³

Opponents argue that the programs have cost taxpayers too much money, have benefited only large producers, have regressively distributed income from taxpayers of modest means to prosperous farmers, have diverted public attention and support from the real problems of rural poverty, have interfered with freedom of farmers to produce and market as they please, have lost their effectiveness through capitalization of benefits into land or through slippage (bringing in new cropland, using more fertilizer, etc.), have interfered with commercial exports of farm products, and have caused inefficiency of production patterns and idling the land resource which has little value for anything but agricultural uses.

The burden is upon the farmer and legislators to develop programs which are acceptable even if not popular to farmers as a whole and simultaneously appeal to nonfarm interests. One step in this direction is to analyze program preferences of farmers and determine what farmers like and dislike about present and potential government farm programs.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

1. To determine the degree of acceptance by farmers of selected government farm programs.
2. To detect socio-economic differences between farmers who

³Luther G. Tweeten, Barry Carr, and Gary Allen, "Land Diversion and Supply Control Programs," Increasing Understanding of Public Problems and Policies (Chicago: Farm Foundation, 1968), p. 130.

approve and farmers who disapprove of selected programs and explain why farmers prefer specific programs.

3. To determine what farmers like and dislike about present government farm programs and why.
4. To list farmers' recommended changes in the way government farm programs are administered.

Outline of Following Chapters

Chapter II describes the areas samples, the methods used to collect the data, the techniques used to analyze the data, and discusses possible bias in the study.

Chapter III analyzes the differences in socio-economic characteristics between farmers who approve and farmers who disapprove of selected programs, and surveys the differences between farmers who "strongly approve" of each program.

Chapter IV lists farmers' likes and dislikes of present government programs and notes farmers' recommended changes in the local administration of programs.

Chapter V summarizes and draws conclusions from the study.

CHAPTER II

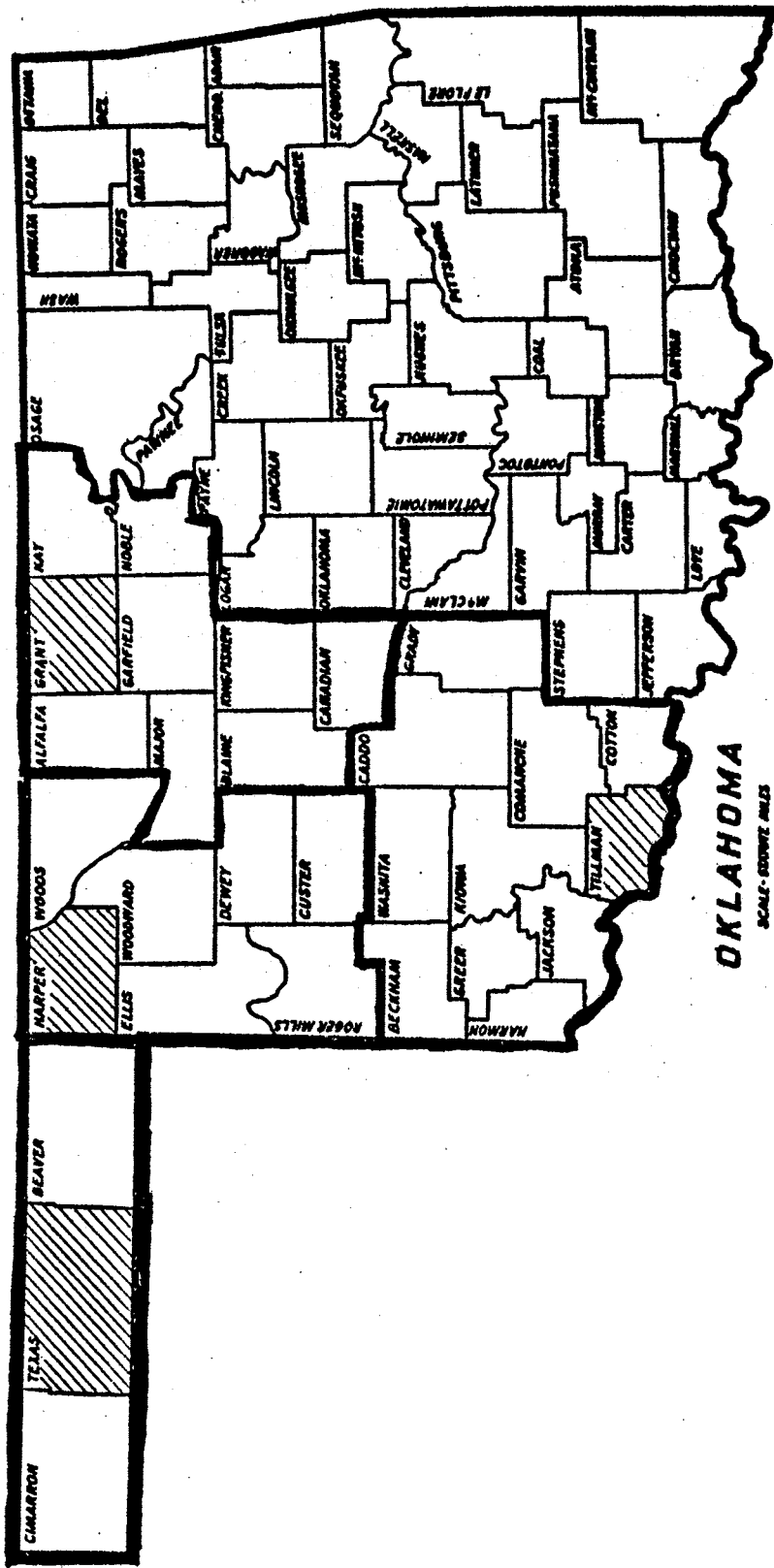
STUDY TECHNIQUE

The Survey and Sampling Procedure

Farm management research personnel of the Oklahoma Agricultural Experiment Station divide the state into somewhat homogeneous subregions according to type of farming, climate, soil types, and farming practices. Crop and livestock budgets are prepared periodically by Experiment Station personnel as a guide to farm management in each of these areas. Western Oklahoma, which produces more than two-thirds of all the wheat and feed grain in the state, is divided into four subregions (Figure 1).

Using a statistically randomized procedure, one county was selected from each of the four subregions in the western half of the state (Figure 1). They were Grant, Harper, Tillman, and Texas counties. By selecting a random sample of farm operators within each county, a profile of farm types, cropping practices, and climates was obtained that characterizes the commercial wheat and feed grain production areas in the state.

Time and budget limitations limited the sample to 198 usable personal interviews from farm operators. The number of farm operators was divided proportionally between the four counties, based on the number of non-irrigated farm units with harvested cropland as defined in the 1964 Census of Agriculture.



Farm operators in each county were further divided by their participation in the 1967 Feed Grain Program and a proportionate number of participants and non-participants were drawn from each county using a statistically randomized procedure. To allow for refusals, deaths, and interviews not complete for other reasons, a replacement sample equal to 25 percent of the original was drawn. Table I exhibits the sample distribution of intended and usable schedules among counties and between participation categories.

TABLE I
SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION AMONG COUNTIES
AND PARTICIPATION CATEGORIES

County	Intended Sample		Usable Schedules	
	Participants	Non-participants	Participants	Non-participants
Grant	58	20	39	34
Harper	21	8	23	10
Texas	29	14	39	6
Tillman	38	12	42	5
Total	146	54	143	55

Characteristics of farm operators completing usable schedules are presented in Table II by county. Operator's average age, educational level, farming experience, and proportion of operators planning to

continue farming for at least five years were similar in each of the four counties. The operator's average age over all counties was 50.8 years, very near the national average; and, as expected, a large number of years farming experience was also reported. Only a few operators in Harper County shared farm management while the proportion in Grant County was much larger (27 percent). Harper County operators worked more on the farm and used more unpaid family labor compared to operators in other counties. Tillman County had the smallest average weeks worked on farms but had almost as much unpaid family labor used on farms as Harper County. Tillman County operators also worked more off the farm than those in other counties. Further diversity between counties was found in farm size which averaged 1,203 acres per operator in Harper County, 961 acres in Texas county, 589 acres in Tillman County, and only 556 acres per operator in Grant County. This indicates the more intensive type farming conducted in the latter. Crop-land acreage and wheat allotments were largest in Harper and Texas Counties, which also possessed the only sizeable feed grain bases and over two-thirds of all rented farms in the sample. Farm Bureau membership was large in all four counties (almost 40 percent) while Farmers' Union Membership was low in all counties except Tillman.

Expectations about product prices influence farm program preferences. An average of all counties showed the expected price was \$1.41 per bushel for wheat harvested in 1968 although the actual farm price was nearer \$1.25 per bushel. While optimistic in Harper County, expectations were most realistic in Texas County, perhaps because interviews there were taken nearer the time of harvest. Farmers were asked, "If you were to quit farming, how would you rate your possibilities for

TABLE II
CHARACTERISTICS OF FARM OPERATORS INTERVIEWED BY COUNTY

Variable	County				Average All Counties
	Grant	Harper	Tillman	Texas	
Operators interviewed (Number)	73	33	47	45	198
Average age (Years)	49.4	51.5	51.5	51.8	50.8
School completed (Years)	12.0	10.5	11.4	11.4	11.5
Years farming (Years)	25.6	29.1	28.8	27.0	27.3
Percent married (Percent)	87.7	94.0	99.5	85.4	90.4
Farm full time (Percent)	79.5	84.8	72.4	75.0	78.7
Intend to farm next 5 years (Percent)	94.5	96.8	95.8	95.3	95.4
Share farm management (Percent)	27.4	6.1	14.9	22.2	19.9
Average weeks worked on farm (Weeks)	33.9	40.9	29.9	34.7	34.3
Average weeks unpaid family labor used on farm (Weeks)	3.8	7.7	6.8	3.9	5.1
Average weeks hired labor used on farm (Weeks)	8.1	10.0	19.4	13.3	12.3
Days worked off farm (Days)	48	59	79	53	62
Farmland (Acres)	556	1203	589	961	763
Cropland (Acres)	399	653	420	650	503
Wheat allotment, 1967 (Acres)	279	430	221	390	316
Farms rented (Percent)	69.2	71.7	58.6	65.5	66.2
Farm Bureau Membership (Percent)	45.2	57.6	25.9	33.3	39.9
Farmers Union Membership (Percent)	11.0	9.1	34.0	6.7	15.2
Fair wheat price (Dollars per bushel)	2.59	2.62	2.40	2.69	2.57
Favor government support price on wheat (Percent)	79.5	78.8	73.3	90.5	80.3
Wheat price support level recommended by those favoring support (Dollars per bushel)	2.31	2.33	2.19	2.42	2.31
Price of wheat expected at harvest in 1968 (Dollars per bushel)	1.42	1.57	1.39	1.27	1.41

TABLE II (Continued)

Variable	County				Average All Counties
	Grant	Harper	Tillman	Texas	
Price of wheat expected in five years (\$/bushel)	1.72	2.03	1.65	1.67	1.75
Total non-farm income (Distribution by percent)					
None	13.9	9.1	36.2	23.3	20.5
\$1-499	27.8	6.1	6.4	14.0	15.9
\$500-999	9.7	24.2	10.6	11.6	12.8
\$1,000-1,999	19.4	12.1	8.5	16.3	14.9
\$2,000-4,999	18.1	27.3	14.9	14.0	17.9
Over \$5,000	11.1	21.2	23.4	20.9	17.9
Gross farm income (Distribution by percent)					
Under \$2,500	0	0	0	2.3	.5
\$2,500-4,999	13.0	6.1	10.6	4.7	9.7
\$5,000-9,999	27.8	18.2	23.4	9.3	21.0
\$10,000-19,999	29.2	48.5	34.0	48.8	37.9
\$20,000-39,999	23.6	18.2	19.1	25.6	22.1
Over \$40,000	5.6	9.1	12.8	9.3	8.7
Net farm income (Distribution by percent)					
Under \$0	1.4	3.0	2.1	0	1.5
\$0-999	4.2	6.1	17.0	11.6	9.2
\$1,000-2,999	29.2	18.2	27.7	27.9	26.7
\$3,000-6,999	47.2	54.5	40.4	41.9	45.6
Over \$7,000	18.1	18.2	12.8	18.6	16.9
Income from non-farm job compared to farming (Distribution by percent)					
Better-off	25.4	24.2	7.3	14.6	17.4
Same	17.9	24.2	34.1	31.7	24.1
Worse-off	56.7	51.5	58.5	53.7	51.8

income in a non-farm job as compared to the income you have been making from farming?" More Harper County operators believed their income was potentially less in non-farm employment than did operators in the other three counties. This opinion may reflect a realistic appraisal of non-farm alternatives based on their average level of education (10.5 years of school completed) and average non-farm income, which was the lowest among all counties.

Farm operators were then asked, "What do you expect the price of wheat to be five years from now?" The average price given by those interviewed was \$1.75 per bushel. Many who specified a higher price explained that the price "must" be higher or farmers like themselves would be unable to continue farming.

Insight into farmers' expectations may be gained through examination of their relative incomes. Harper County operators, whose price expectations were the most optimistic, exhibited the lowest average non-farm income, shared the lowest average gross farm income with Texas County, and reported the lowest net farm income of all counties. The highest non-farm and net farm incomes were earned in Tillman County. When asked what they considered to be a fair wheat price, Tillman County operators indicated the lowest price of all counties. Tillman County operators also voiced the lowest percent approval of a government support price for wheat and quoted the lowest level at which the price of wheat should be supported. Seemingly then, low income farmers believed prices would not be driven up via supply and demand, but because of government intervention. Higher income farmers, on the other hand, did not admit dependence on government programs as much as low income farmers and indicated they could raise wheat profitably at lower prices.

Questionnaire Design

This study uses only a portion of the questions asked in the interview given farmers and is part of a joint project between the Oklahoma Agricultural Experiment Station and the Economic Research Service of the United States Department of Agriculture. The purposes of the project thus extend beyond those discussed here. With the objectives of the project in mind, items were formulated in part from earlier research, to include in the questionnaire. Pretests were then made by interviewing farmers to determine their reactions to the questions and the way they were worded. After pretesting and correcting was completed, a thirteen-page questionnaire resulted.

The questionnaire was broken into two parts. Part I, which consisted of questions requiring more thought, was mailed to the respondents with a letter asking them to complete Part I and explaining Part II would be completed at the interview.⁴ The interviewer contacted respondents to arrange a mutually convenient time for a personal interview for completing Part II. At this time, Part I was checked for completeness and accuracy. It is estimated that about one-half of the respondents had completed Part I before the interview.

Over 75 percent of the interviews were taken by the author and one other person. A few experimental interviews were conducted during the summer of 1967. Grant and Harper County operators were interviewed during the last three months of 1967 and the first two months of 1968,

⁴Allen Barry Carr, "Comparative Efficiency of Selective Voluntary Control Programs in the Use of Government Funds," (unpub. Ph.D. thesis, Oklahoma State University, 1971), Appendix.

while Tillman and Texas County interviews were conducted during the spring and summer of 1968.

Two types of questions or statements were used to measure respondents' opinions. The first was an open end question which required the farmer to write his answer in the space provided. The second was a statement to which the respondent was instructed to indicate the extent of his agreement or disagreement on a five point scale: strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree. This adaptation of the Likert scale provided more information than a simple agree-disagree dichotomy and has been used successfully in opinion polls and similar research.

If the respondent marked "strongly agree" on a statement, a score of one was given; "agree" was given a score of two' and so on to a score of five for "strongly disagree." These scores permitted a quantitative evaluation of responses.

Refusals and Possible Bias

Of the names drawn for the sample, 79 percent resulted in complete, usable schedules. The percent completion in each of the four counties was: Grant, 74; Tillman, 75; Texas, 83; and Harper, 92. Because Grant was the first county surveyed and interviewers were not yet experienced, a smaller proportion of completions resulted. The relatively low proportion of completions in Texas County arose because operators were interviewed at planting and harvesting time. Some noncompletions were the result of direct refusals, while others were due to death, illness and other reasons.

Exclusion of non-respondents may bias the results. Those not completing the questionnaire may have been biased against government programs. However, the portion of non-completions was so small that conclusions of the study are not thought to be significantly affected.

CHAPTER III

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS RELATED TO FARM PROGRAM PREFERENCES

The Hypothesis and Variables

The general hypothesis of this chapter is that operators' preferences for government farm programs are related to selected characteristics of the operators. An analysis of these relationship provides insight into reasons for specific government farm program preferences and aid in determining specific aspects of programs which farmers deem "acceptable."

Selected government farm programs were presented for evaluation by farmers. Ten of these programs were prefaced with the question, "The following programs have been proposed as ways to deal with the farm problem. If these programs could be made to work, would you approve or disapprove?" Responses were indicated on a five-point scale ranging from "strongly approve" to "strongly disapprove." Percentage distribution of farmers' approval or disapproval of selected farm programs are listed in Table III. To simplify, initially these results are presented on a three-point scale. This was achieved by grouping into a single category, the "strongly agree" and "agree" responses. "Strongly disagree" and "disagree" responses were likewise combined.

TABLE III
 PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF 198 OKLAHOMA
 FARMERS' APPROVAL OR DISAPPROVAL OF
 SELECTED FARM PROGRAMS

Item	Approve	Undecided	Disapprove
1. Wheat and feed grains would be under a voluntary acreage diversion program. Each individual farmer would be free to decide each year if he wants to receive payment to divert land from his crop allotment and be eligible for price supports.	71	11	18
2. Continue the present wheat and feed grain programs with price support loan and marketing certificates for wheat.*	56	11	33
3. An organization of farmers themselves (independent of the government) would control production so as to raise farm prices and incomes.	51	16	33
4. The government would pay farmers for long term (10 or 20 years) land retirement. There would be no acreage controls on specific crops, but the amount of cropland available for farming would be reduced by the amount of land retired.*	36	11	53
5. Wheat and feed grains would be subject to mandatory acreage controls of the type used for wheat before 1964. All farmers would be required to comply with allotments if approved in a national referendum.	31	15	54
6. All government controls and price supports would be terminated, and the farm economy would be on a free market.	28	15	57
7. The government would lease the rights to grow wheat crops and feed grains on a farm. Then this farm could no longer grow wheat or feed grains for the life of the lease. The owner could use the land for any other purposes, including the production of other crops.	24	17	59

TABLE III (Continued)

Item	Approve	Undecided	Disapprove
8. A farmer would submit sealed bids to the ASCS showing the payment required for him to divert land from production. The ASCS would accept those bids from farmers that would remove the most production per dollar spent by the government.	19	20	61
9. Wheat and feed grain allotments could be bought and sold among farmers, so that allotments would eventually end up in the hands of those who would make the best use of them.	16	6	79
10. The government would buy whole farms and combine several farms to be used for public recreation or leased for grazing.	4	5	91

* These items were taken from another part of the questionnaire where the scale was on an agree-disagree basis rather than the approve-disapprove basis used for other items in this table.

For each program, characteristics of farm operators and their farm units were compiled into frequency tables or averaged by response categories. A chi-square test, utilizing the five-point scale, was run to determine the significance of the variables associated with each program.

These variables were:

1. Farm full time.
2. Farm next five years
3. Share farm management with a partner

4. Farm organizations
5. Average weeks worked on the farm
6. Average age
7. Government support price on wheat
8. Possibilities of income in a non-farm job as compared to farm income
9. Total off farm income
10. Gross farm income
11. Net farm income

Other variables for which averages or percentages were calculated are:

1. Education
2. Farming experience
3. Marital status
4. Unpaid family labor used on the farm
5. Labor hired
6. Operator labor employed off the farm
7. Farmland acres
8. Cropland acres
9. Wheat allotment acres
10. Farmers' opinion of a fair wheat price
11. Farmers' opinion of a support price on wheat
12. Expected price of wheat at harvest
13. Expected price of wheat in five years

A complete breakdown of the five-point scale on all ten programs, with averages and variable frequency, is shown in the Appendix.

Degree of Program Approval and Significant Variables

Three of the ten programs presented to farmers received majority approval. Two of these were voluntary programs. The latter permit each individual farmer the freedom to decide whether to comply with program restrictions and receive price and income supports. Relative to mandatory programs, treasury costs are higher and consumer food costs are lower.

The strongest level of approval of any program alternative was for Item 1, a voluntary acreage diversion program similar to that used for feed grains in recent years (Table III). Farm operators approving of Item 1 were younger, and more were married and farmed full time as compared to those disapproving. Approving operators also reported larger farm sizes and cropland acreages but smaller wheat allotments. This is consistent with accompanying higher non-farm employment and lower net farm income indicated by those disapproving. However, none of the variables associated with degree of approval was statistically significant.

Item 2, which proposes to continue present wheat and feed grain programs with price support loans and marketing certificates for wheat, received 56 percent approval (15 percent less than Item 1). In other parts of the questionnaire farmers voiced strong approval of the present type of wheat and feed grain program, but criticized it for supporting prices and income at a low level.

Unlike individuals approving of Item 1, those approving of Item 2 were older and had farmed longer than those disapproving. Over eight percent more of those disapproving, however, stated intentions of

farming the next five years (significant at the .02 level). Those approving operated larger farms and more cropland, but unlike those accepting Item 1, possessed larger wheat allotments. As expected, 17 percent more of those approving than disapproving of Item 2 favored a government support price on wheat (significant at the .01 level). Like Item 1, those disapproving of Item 2 had unusually large non-farm incomes. This variable was significant at the .10 level for Item 2.

The antithesis of voluntary programs is mandatory programs through which the government requires all producers to comply with marketing controls, acreage allotments, or production controls. Lower treasury costs but higher consumer food costs are incurred under mandatory than under voluntary programs. Ranking fifth among the ten programs surveyed is Item 5, a mandatory program of the type used for wheat before 1964. Under this program as presented, all farmers are required to comply with acreage controls if approved in a national referendum.

It was expected that more farm operators approving of Item 5 as compared to those disapproving would favor a government support price on wheat because those possessing larger allotments and bases would find this type of program more profitable.

Little difference in age, education, and farming experience was noted between those approving and disapproving. But contrary to expectations, those approving operated smaller farms and less cropland than those disapproving and possessed only slightly larger wheat allotments. Those approving exhibited larger gross farm incomes and a larger proportion shared management (significant at the .10 level). While farm operators in each category expressed very little difference in the price of wheat expected in five years, farmers disapproving believed

their income possibilities in a non-farm job (as compared to the income they have been making in farming) to be much worse than those who approved of Item 5 (significant at the .10 level).

Because the Farm Bureau opposed and the Farmers Union favored the 1964 Wheat Referendum, it was expected that a larger portion of Farm Bureau members than of Farmers Union members would disapprove of Item 5. Little difference, however, was indicated between categories in farm organization membership. Further, over 12 percent more of those approving than disapproving of Item 5 favored a support price on wheat. Yet, this relationship was not statistically significant.

Mandatory programs have been criticized by many who oppose farm programs for freezing production on inefficient units--for not allowing allotments and bases to be used by those who could economically make the best use of them. A program modification (Item 9) which would circumvent such criticism received only 17 percent approval. This modification permits allotments and bases to be bought and sold among farmers, directing production into the hands of individuals who would make the best use of them.

Many farm operators interviewed believed negotiable allotments and bases give large farmers an advantage over smaller ones. Others reasoned such a change would encourage production, causing product prices to fall. Some expressed fear that landlords might sell allotments and bases and were concerned over probable inability to repurchase allotments at a later date.

It was hypothesized that small, part-time farmers possessing few allotment and base acres would find negotiable allotments desirable. Allotments and bases which could not be adequately utilized in small

units could be sold. Farmer operators who approved indeed operated much smaller farms and less cropland than those who disapproved of negotiable allotments. They also possessed wheat allotments averaging almost 60 acres per operator less than those disapproving the program. Less time was worked on the farm by those approving than those disapproving was statistically significant at the .001 level. Individuals deeming the program acceptable also worked more time off the farm, hired more farm labor, and exhibited significantly higher non-farm incomes (significant at the .10 level). Although not significant, 18 percent fewer of those approving were full-time rather than part-time farmers.

Another hypothesis was that more Farm Bureau members than Farmers Union members would approve this modification because of these organizations' national policies. The opposite relationship was found and was significant at the .05 level.

Item 8, with less than 20 percent approval, proposed the use of sealed bids to determine land to be retired. The ASCS would receive sealed bids from farmers containing the payment required for each to divert land from production and would accept those bids from farmers that removes the most production per dollar spent by the government. Most respondents objected to the use of sealed bids, believing lower diversion payments would result. Farm operators approving the use of sealed bids were older, less educated, and more experienced than farmers who disapproved. Approving farmers operated farms averaging 119 acres more farmland, 130 acres more cropland, and 70 acres larger wheat allotments. Farm operators who accepted Item 8 exhibited considerably higher nonfarm incomes (significant at the .05 level), yet gross

and net farm incomes varied little between the two categories.

A proposal suggesting large change from existing programs is a free market for agriculture (Item 6). A free market entails the removal of government production controls and price support programs. Decisions of what to produce, how much to produce, and how to produce would be based on price signals from demand-supply conditions. A free market received 28 percent approval from farmers interviewed, or three percent less than that for mandatory programs (Item 5).

It was expected that farmers favoring government exit from agriculture would be characterized as: (1) younger, part-time operators of smaller units receiving a large portion of their incomes from non-farm sources and unable to take advantage of benefits offered under existing programs, or (2) farmers managing large acreages and believing larger incomes were attainable in the absence of production restrictions. Farm operators approving were younger, less experienced, and fewer farmed full time than did those disapproving. Higher non-farm incomes and lower gross and net farm incomes were also reported by those approving of Item 6.

Still, the only variable found to be statistically significant was the question of government support of the price of wheat. Almost one-half more of those farmers approving a full market favored support prices on wheat than those who didn't (significant at the .001 level).

It was also hypothesized that a larger proportion of Farm Bureau members than of Farmers Union members would favor a free market. However, no apparent relationship exists between preference for Item 6 and farm organization membership.

Pressure from urban congressmen and the American Farm Bureau Federation to gradually phase out existing government farm programs is causing more attention to be focused on proposals similar to that outlined in Item 3, an organization of farmers themselves (independent of the government) formed to control production and raise farm prices and incomes. This proposal received 51 percent approval and ranked third among the ten programs on degree of approval. Many who approved, however, considered the change improbable and cited farmer individualism and independent attitudes as their reason.

Farmers approving of the self-managed organization as compared to the group dissenting operated, on the average, over 150 acres more farmland, almost 40 acres more cropland, and possessed 35 acres more wheat allotment. Little difference existed between the groups in magnitude of non-farm and net farm incomes. Nevertheless, individuals favoring the bargaining organization reported lower gross farm incomes (significant at the .10 level). While little difference was shown between the approval and disapproval categories with respect to full time farming, persons who disapproved of a farm bargaining organization worked almost 80 days per year in non-farm employment. Perhaps farmers realized a proposal of this nature would take several years to implement; a significantly larger proportion approving as compared to those disapproving intended to farm five years or more (significant at the .10 level).

Long-term retirement programs (Items 4, 7, and 10) encourage the transition of land from intensive crop production to extensive uses. Such programs reduce inputs and, if combined with complementary short-run assistance, could return less productive cropland to grass, trees,

or recreational uses.

Long-term grain or general land retirement programs offer an opportunity to stabilize retirement income for older farmers wishing to discontinue farming or decrease the size of crop operations requiring larger amounts of labor. Item 4, a 10-20 year land rental proposal, places no acreage controls on specific crops. Receiving 36 percent acceptance, this proposal ranked fourth among the ten programs behind two voluntary programs (Items 1 and 2) and a farmer bargaining organization (Item 3). Age was statistically significant at the .10 level for Item 4. Farmers approving were four years older and had farmed longer than farmers who disapproved. They also operated much larger farms, consisting of larger cropland and wheat allotment acreages. Approving farmers exhibited higher levels of non-farm, gross, and net farm income; yet, none of these variables was statistically significant at the .10 level.

Whether or not farmers farmed full time or part time was significant at the .01 level, but the difference between the approval and disapproval categories was small. A greater percent, 12.6 (significant at the .02 level), of those approving than disapproving of Item 4 believed the government should support the price of wheat.

Another long term program, Item 7, provides for the lease of wheat allotments and feed grain bases but places no restrictions on the use of land except that wheat or feed grains could not be grown on the farm for the duration of the lease. This suggestion was welcomed by only 24 percent, ranking this Item seventh among the ten programs presented. Many farmers objected, reasoning livestock production on diverted acres would cause livestock prices to fall.

As in Item 4, those approving were older than those who disapproved (significant at the .10 level). Another variable significant at the .10 level was farm operator's intentions of farming the next five years. Eight percent fewer of those approving as compared to those disapproving intended to continue farming five years hence. Larger farmland acreage, cropland acreages, and wheat allotments were operated by those who approved of Item 7; however, a significant proportion did not favor a government support price on wheat.

Farmers rejected the purchase of land by the government to be leased for grazing or recreation. Item 10 received only four percent approval and was the least preferred of all ten proposals presented to farmers. Age was not a significant factor although those accepting this proposal averaged over 55 years of age. Farmland acreage averaged almost 70 acres less for those approving but cropland acreage and wheat allotments were larger. Also a smaller proportion (significant at the .05 level) of those approving farmed full time as compared to those disapproving. Although it was expected that a larger proportion of those approving would favor a government support price on wheat, this factor was not statistically significant.

Characteristics of Farmers with Strong Program Preferences

The above section examines farmers' program preferences and characteristics based on the dichotomy of "approval" and "disapproval." Characteristics of farmers who "strongly approved" of particular programs will now be briefly analyzed and compared among programs. This extension of the analysis provides some insight into the characteristics of farmers voicing "extreme" satisfaction with the proposals

discussed above. None of the proposals received strong approval by a high percentage of the respondents.

Item 3, "an organization of farmers themselves (independent of the government) which would control production so as to raise farm prices and income," most frequently elicited strong approval. Total approval was 51 percent while 12 percent "strongly approved" (Table IV).

Farm operators strongly approving of Item 3 received less education, possessed (on the average) the same number of years farming experience, and were near the same age as farm operators strongly approving of other programs. They operated near average size farms but indicated relatively low net farm incomes. More than 80 days per year were spent in non-farm employment by these farmers who also received a larger portion of their income from non-farm sources than did those strongly approving of other programs. Nearly 42 percent of those strongly approving were Farm Bureau members while little more than eight percent were Farmers Union members.

A free market, Item 6, received 28 percent total approval and 11 percent strong approval. In the latter category farm operators were of near average age and farming experience; however, educational level was high relative to other categories. More time was spent in non-farm employment and non-farm incomes were relatively high. Farms were near average size but were comprised of smaller cropland acreages and wheat allotments yielding a lower net farm income. All intended to farm the next five years and a larger proportion of this group were Farm Bureau members than any other. Only 38 percent believed the government should support the price of wheat, and the wheat price expected in five years was lower than that given by most other groups. Also, fewer of the

TABLE IV
CHARACTERISTICS OF FARM OPERATORS STRONGLY APPROVING OF SELECTED GOVERNMENT FARM PROGRAMS¹

Variable	Unit	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4	Item 5	Item 6	Item 7	Item 8	Item 9	Item 10
Percent of operators interviewed	(Percent)	10.1	5.5	12.1	4.5	6.1	10.6	3.5	2.5	4.5	0.5
Average age	(Age)	49.7	57.1	51.2	59.1	46.8	49.3	50.0	52.0	46.8	27.0
School completed	(Years)	11.9	11.2	11.4	11.0	12.7	12.5	11.0	11.6	12.6	15.0
Years farming	(Years)	26.5	31.1	28.4	31.8	23.1	28.7	29.0	29.0	21.9	13.0
Percent married	(Percent)	90.0	90.9	91.7	77.8	100.0	90.5	85.7	100.0	88.9	100.0
Percent farm full time	(Percent)	75.0	63.6	75.0	44.4	83.3	71.4	57.1	80.0	66.7	0
Percent intending to farm next five years	(Percent)	90.0	100.0	95.8	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Percent sharing farm management	(Percent)	30.0	18.2	16.7	11.1	8.3	28.6	14.3	40.0	22.2	0
Average number of weeks worked on farm (1966)	(Weeks)	39.2	38.5	33.9	34.9	39.6	33.1	36.7	36.0	40.4	20.0
Average number of weeks unpaid family labor used on the farm (1966)	(Weeks)	5.7	5.9	5.1	4.2	10.8	7.8	8.7	4.0	8.8	0
Average number of weeks hired labor used on the farm (1966)	(Weeks)	17.4	17.5	10.0	24.3	13.7	10.5	17.6	7.4	22.8	10.0
Average number of days worked off the farm (1966)	(Days)	47.3	25.4	81.0	66.7	77.4	99.6	81.4	48.0	80.0	240.0
Average farmland	(Acres)	619.9	979.8	767.1	975.4	819.2	724.8	856.9	630.6	1022.0	160.0
Average cropland	(Acres)	439.5	609.6	476.5	655.9	524.2	333.7	737.4	492.8	595.9	125.0
Average wheat allotment	(Acres)	276.7	376.6	324.6	422.0	374.5	245.1	416.0	324.8	396.2	96.0
Farmers reporting membership in Farm Bureau	(Percent)	25.0	18.2	41.7	33.3	16.7	42.9	9	40.0	22.2	9
Farmers reporting membership in Farmers Union	(Percent)	5.0	18.2	8.3	22.2	16.7	4.8	14.3	9	11.1	0
Average fair wheat price	(Dollars)	2.52	2.59	2.66	2.89	2.70	2.72	2.94	2.58	2.44	2.50
Percent favoring wheat support	(Percent)	80.0	63.6	70.8	77.8	91.7	32.1	100.0	80.0	77.8	100.0
Average suggested wheat price support level	(Dollars)	2.26	2.42	2.46	2.77	2.38	2.36	2.64	2.52	2.03	2.30
Average wheat price expected at harvest (1968)	(Dollars)	1.40	1.42	1.47	1.37	1.39	1.44	1.35	1.42	1.35	1.48

TABLE IV (Continued)

Variable	Unit	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4	Item 5	Item 6	Item 7	Item 8	Item 9	Item 10
Average wheat price expected in five years	(Dollars)	1.81	1.92	1.97	2.13	1.56	1.71	2.04	2.19	1.72	1.75
Income possibilities in a non-farm job as compared to farming ²	(Category average)	4.16	4.60	3.57	4.25	4.09	3.25	4.43	5.00	4.55	5.00
Non-farm income ³	(Category average)	2.45	2.09	3.04	2.89	2.00	2.81	2.71	2.00	1.78	4.00
Gross farm income ⁴	(Category average)	3.00	3.27	2.78	3.33	2.91	2.81	3.00	2.60	3.22	1.00
Net farm income ⁵	(Category average)	2.85	2.54	2.52	2.78	2.54	2.43	3.00	2.60	2.89	3.00

¹Items (government farm programs) are described as follows: Item 1. Wheat and feed grains would be under a voluntary acreage diversion program. Each individual farmer would be free to decide each year if he wants to receive payment to divert land from his crop allotment and be eligible for price supports; Item 2. Continue the present wheat and feed grain programs with price support loan and marketing certificates for wheat; Item 3. An organization of farmers themselves (independent of the government) would control production so as to raise farm prices and incomes; Item 4. The government would pay farmers for long term (10 or 20 years) land retirement. There would be no acreage controls on specific crops, but the amount of cropland available for farming would be reduced by the amount of land retired; Item 5. Wheat and feed grains would be subject to mandatory acreage controls of the type used for wheat before 1964. All farmers would be required to comply with allotments if approved in a national referendum; Item 6. All government controls and price supports would be terminated, and the farm economy would be on a free market; Item 7. The government would lease the rights to grow wheat crops and feed grains on a farm. Then this farm could no longer grow wheat or feed grains for the life of the lease. The owner could use the land for any other purposes, including the production of other crops; Item 8. A farmer would submit sealed bids to the ASCS showing the payment required for him to divert land from production. The ASCS would accept those bids from farmers that would remove the most production per dollar spent by the government; Item 9. Wheat and feed grain allotments would eventually end up in the hands of those who would make the best use of them; Item 10. The government would buy whole farms and combine several farms to be used for public recreation or leased for grazing.

²A value of "1" was given the response "better off", "3" for "same", and "5" for "worse off". Values in the table represent an average of farmers' responses.

³A value of "0" was given for a response "none", "1" for \$1-499, "2" for \$500-999, "3" for \$1,000-1,999, "4" for \$2,000-4,999, and "5" for over \$5,000. Values in the table represent an average of farmers' responses.

⁴A value of "0" was given for a response "under \$2,500", "1" for \$2,500-4,999, "2" for \$5,000-9,999, "3" for \$10,000-19,999, "4" for \$20,000-39,999, and "5" for over \$40,000. Values in the table represent an average of farmers' responses.

⁵A value of "0" was given for a response "under 0", "1" for \$0-999, "2" for \$1,000-2,999, "3" for \$3,000-6,999, and "4" for over \$7,000. Values in the table represent an average of farmers' responses.

farmers in this group than in any other group voicing strong approval believed they would be "worse off" with respect to their income possibilities in a non-farm job. In absolute terms, however, this group did believe they were "worse off" in a non-farm job as did all other groups.

Receiving the largest total approval and ten percent strong approval was Item 1, a voluntary program, essentially the present feed grain program. Near average age, education, and farming experience characterized this group. All stated intentions of farming the next five years. A relatively large number of weeks were worked on the farm by these farm operators as compared with other groups. However, their farmland acreage and wheat allotments were smaller while cropland acreage was only average in comparison with other groups voicing extreme satisfaction.

Five times as many Farmers Union members as Farm Bureau members "strongly approved" of Item 1. Gross farm income and net farm income reported by this group was high, yet non-farm income was near average compared to other groups.

A mandatory supply control program similar to that used before 1964 (Item 5) received a "strongly approve" response from over six percent of the farmers interviewed. These individuals were the youngest, most highly educated and most inexperienced found in any group voicing extreme satisfaction with any program. All intended to farm the next five years and more farmed full time than did those in any group. The farm units managed were comprised of large wheat allotments relative to farmland and cropland acreages. Both non-farm income and net farm income were low for this group. They utilized almost forty

weeks per year of their own labor on the farm and employed more family labor than any group. An unusually large proportion of these farm operators believed the government should support the price of wheat.

Five and one-half percent of farmers interviewed strongly approved of Item 2, a proposal suggesting continuation of present wheat and feed grain programs. These farm operators averaged over fifty-nine years of age, 31 years farming experience and slightly more than 11 years education. Compared to other groups they operated larger farm acreages (a large proportion of which was cropland and wheat allotment), worked a large amount of time on the farm, and spent little time in non-farm employment. Non-farm and net farm incomes were low relative to other groups; however, gross farm income was high. Only a small proportion of this group were Farm Bureau members, but a larger proportion believed their income possibilities to be inferior in a non-farm job than did most other groups.

Less than five percent total approval was received for each of the other items. Because few farmers strongly approved of these proposals, they are not discussed.

Summary

A voluntary acreage diversion program similar to the present feed grain program received the highest percentage of approval by interviewed farmers. A proposal to continue the present wheat and feed grain programs received the second largest percentage approval. The only other program to receive majority (50 percent) approval was an organization of farmers themselves to control production and raise farm prices and income. Proposals suggesting mandatory programs, a "free

market" for agriculture and long-term retirement programs all received less than majority approval.

Older farmers found long-term retirement programs to their advantage. A significant proportion of farmers who approved a long-term land retirement program and a land purchase program farmed less than full time. Unexpectedly, a significantly larger proportion of Farmers Union members than of Farm Bureau members approved a program modification proposing negotiable allotments. It was also found that those favoring negotiable allotments worked less time on the farm and received higher non-farm income than those who opposed the proposal.

A significant proportion of those favoring a free market for agriculture did not think the government should support the price of wheat. Gross farm income was higher for those approving than those disapproving of mandatory acreage controls and lower for those favoring a farmer bargaining organization as compared to those not favoring such an organization. Farmland acreages, cropland acreages, and wheat allotments were larger for those favoring than for those rejecting long-term retirement programs.

Comparing farm operators strongly approving of each program presented revealed that older, more experienced farmers preferred continuing present programs and long-term land retirement programs. A high educational level characterized farmers strongly approving of both mandatory programs and a free market for agriculture. Farm operators who strongly approved of a free market also spent a large proportion of time in non-farm employment--non-farm income was correspondingly high. Those favoring negotiable allotments and the allotment and base lease arrangement possessed larger amounts of cropland and wheat allotments

than groups strongly approving of other programs. The same was true for those individuals who wanted to continue present programs. Large non-farm incomes were reported by farmers who desired a farm bargaining organization, a long-term retirement program, and a free market. High gross farm incomes were also exhibited by farmers who strongly approved of continuing present programs, long-term rental and lease programs and a proposal to make allotments and bases negotiable.

CHAPTER IV

FARMERS' COMMENTS ON PRESENT GOVERNMENT FARM PROGRAMS

Introduction

Questions were asked to determine what farmers liked and disliked about present programs and what changes they recommended in the way these programs were administered. These questions were: (1) "What do you like best about present government farm programs?"; (2) "What are your main criticisms of present government farm programs?"; (3) "What changes would you like to see in the way programs are administered by the local ASCS?"

Answers to these questions were grouped into general patterns of ideas, then percentages of farmers expressing these ideas were calculated. Answers not fitting into groups of ideas held by a relatively large number of farmers were listed separately in a miscellaneous group of responses.

Farmers often responded with more than one answer to some questions; thus, the number of responses exceeds the number of farmers interviewed. Tables V, VI, and VII show the percent of responses given. When interpreting the data, it is well to recognize that some farmers may have agreed with remarks of other farmers but did not give a particular response because they failed to think of it at the time.

What Farmers Like Best About Government Farm Programs

Farmers were first asked, "What do you like best about present government farm programs?" (Table V). Of farmers interviewed, a large proportion (34.8 percent of responses) indicated certificate payments. They explained that certificate payments were issued even if crops production failed. This enabled farmers to meet fixed obligations like taxes, living expenses, and the expense of putting in the next crop. Some farmers went on to say that because of the guaranteed payments they were able to pursue long-term management plans with greater certainty. The most common statement characterizing farmers' attitudes toward certificate payments was, "Certificate payments are one of the best kinds of insurance a farmer can have." Other farmers said certificate payments also reduce credit needs and interest expenses.

The response "none" or "no answer" was given by 29.8 percent of the farmers. These answers frequently indicated indifference to present programs, or that the farmer could not think of any one part of the program he liked best.

A number of responses (8.1 percent) indicated preference for the present program because it is more flexible and permits more individual freedom than did previous programs except that of the free market. The present program is voluntary, provides for substitution between feed grains, wheat, and other grains, permits diversion of certain crops on a year-to-year basis, and provides several alternatives through which programs may be adapted to particular operations.

TABLE V
 WHAT FARMERS LIKE BEST ABOUT PRESENT GOVERNMENT
 FARM PROGRAMS--RESPONSES BY PERCENTAGES

Response	Percent
1. Certificate payments help reduce income instability, allows the farmer to plan ahead, making for better management decisions, and provide an income support for farmers.	34.8
2. None or no answer given.	29.8
3. Because the present program is voluntary and allows substitution between feed grains and wheat it is more flexible than any program we have had. The program therefore provides more alternatives through which the farmer can integrate his operations with government programs.	8.1
4. The government through the present program has established effective acreage and supply controls and price supports (loans) which have helped the farmer.	7.6
5. Nothing.	7.6
6. The present program is voluntary	6.6
7. The general type of program we have now is the best program we have had.	5.6
8. The soil conservation program helps conserve the soil for future generations.	3.0
9. Miscellaneous responses:	8.0
Diverted acres have been taken away from the wheat program so that we can make use of all our land.	1.0
Processors pay the major part of certificate payments.	0.5
The present program is better than none although not satisfactory.	0.5
Certificate payments increase the credit potential of farmers.	0.5

TABLE V (Continued)

Response	Percent
Federal Crop Insurance reduces the risk of low income when a crop failure occurs.	0.5
The wheat program is terrible but the cotton program is very good.	0.5
Under the present program I measure my own wheat. This reduces red tape and the bother of having someone come out to measure my wheat.	0.5
The ideals of the program are in the right direction but programs shift profit margins to retailers and wholesalers.	0.5
Price supports on grain help hold up the market price of wheat.	0.5
Certificate payments encourage younger people to start farming.	0.5
Cross compliance reduces slippage in programs.	0.5
Diverting a small percentage of allotment helps cut total acreage without forcing whole farm diversion.	0.5
I like being paid for ground not in production like the conservation reserve program.	0.5
I could not make any money on cotton without the government's help.	0.5
Government farm programs provide at least some order and organization in farm policy.	0.5

In areas where crop failures are common, farmers may choose to plant 150 percent of their wheat allotment and sell an amount determined by projected yield and base acres. The remainder is stored and may be sold in a year of crop failure, thereby stabilizing income and

reducing risks. The substitution provision was mentioned most in comments on flexibility. Farmers could plant summer crops like feed grains when it was difficult to plant wheat due to poor weather conditions.

Further support of these ideas is found upon examination of related questions. The answer, "The present program is voluntary," was the reply given 5.9 percent of the time. Further, 5.6 percent of the responses implied the "general type" of present program is the best ever. Still another 7.6 percent of responses pointed to the belief that the government, through the present program, had established effective supply controls and price supports (loans) which helped farmers.

"Nothing" was the answer given 7.6 percent of the time. Those farmers giving this response either did not like the present program, favored some other type of program, or favored no program at all, usually the latter.

The soil conservation program was deemed most desirable by three percent of farmers. These individuals expressed concern over land preservation for future generations, but were indifferent about alternative aspects. Some even went so far as to say they would like to see the soil conservation program made mandatory and expressed concern that farmers were not using good soil conservation practices.

Eight percent of the responses were not mentioned more than twice. These miscellaneous comments are listed in Table V. The responses do not represent a large number of farmers and will not be discussed.

Farmers' Criticisms of Present Government Farm Programs

The second open end question farmers were asked was, "What are your main criticisms of present government farm programs?" Farmers most often stated that the spread between farmers' receipts and expenditures was so small that receiving an income comparable to non-farm workers was impossible. This view was directed by 28.8 percent of the replies (Table VI). Most said certificate payments and market prices of farm products were too low. Others criticized the low levels of farm loans and diversion payments. Farmers believed government programs should increase farm incomes to cope with rapidly ascending costs.

Ten percent of the responses expressed belief of too much government control in agriculture. Many felt a certain amount of government control was necessary for effective programs, but some wanted government farm programs terminated (see "free market" in Table III).

Answers given eight and six-tenths percent of the time were, "Present programs are internally inconsistent and are not accomplishing anything." Farmers explained that surpluses of farm commodities, low farm prices, and low farm incomes still exist despite all efforts by the government to correct these problems. It was believed programs were in conflict when farmers were required to plant allotments or lose those allotments while substitution permitted farmers to shift production from one crop and thereby increase production of some crops. Many of the farmers interviewed stated that the substitution provision was unfair to farmers who did not possess sizeable bases or allotments.

TABLE VI

FARMERS' CRITICISMS OF PRESENT GOVERNMENT
FARM PROGRAMS--RESPONSES BY PERCENTAGES

Response	Percent
1. The spread between the farmers' receipts and expenditures is so small that he cannot make an income comparable to nonfarm workers.	28.8
2. None or no criticisms.	21.2
3. Larger farmers are given advantages over smaller farmers because certificate payments are based on production. There should be a limit on the amount of certificate payments one farmer may receive. Also larger farmers are in a better position to buy poor farmers with large allotments or bases and transfer the allotments to better farms.	20.7
4. Farm programs change too much from year to year and information on the new program is released too late for the farmer to make long term plans.	11.6
5. There is too much government control in agriculture.	10.1
6. Present allotments, bases, and projected yields were established inequitably between farmers and are unfair.	9.6
7. Present programs are internally inconsistent and are not accomplishing anything in that we still have surpluses, low prices and low farm income.	8.6
8. The substitution provision of the program is unfair to some farmers.	5.0
9. Miscellaneous criticisms	33.5
The present program is set up on a national basis and does not work properly for all farming areas. Programs are not even flexible enough to fit different operations within counties.	4.0
The government through the CCC and support prices holds the price of wheat down at times when prices might have otherwise risen.	3.5
The cost of government farm programs is excessive. Administration costs are too large and the farmer receives only a small portion of the total agricultural budget.	3.5

TABLE VI (Continued)

Response	Percent
Farm programs involve too many restrictions and cross compliance works hardships on some farmers whose landlords differ with regard to participation in programs.	2.5
We should not have certificate payments because they increase land prices. Certificate payments are unwarranted in areas like East Colorado in which farmers don't attempt to harvest crops except to maintain their payments.	2.0
New markets and new uses for farm products should be developed to expand demand for farm products.	1.5
Long term land retirement programs should be used to decrease the supply of farm products. They would be more effective.	1.5
Mandatory programs would control production more effectively than expensive voluntary programs and would provide a more equitable solution to supply control	1.0
All farmers should be in or out of the program. I do not like making a market for larger farmers who don't comply and plant all their land.	1.0
Program alternatives, allotments and potential for expanding projected yields vary too much between states and counties.	1.0
Colleges and universities should be given more money to develop substitute crops for farmers.	0.5
Feed grain bases and wheat allotments should be interchangeable when weather conditions cause failure of one crop or another. This would help stabilize the farmer's income.	0.5
There are too many little useless restrictions on idle land.	0.5
False information given on supplies of farm products leads farmers to think they should produce more. The government increased wheat allotments 32% which resulted in surplus wheat and low prices.	0.5

TABLE VI (Continued)

Response	Percent
There are no special advantages to an individual who wants to farm.	0.5
Consumers are not educated on government farm policy. This lack of education and public understanding gives agriculture a bad public image.	0.5
Farmers do not receive certificate payments until after harvest.	0.5
We do not have an experienced farmer as Secretary of Agriculture like Henry Bellmon or Charles Shuman.	0.5
The tax placed on millers to pay for certificates should be increased enough to give farmers their fair share of the consumer's dollar.	0.5
Soil conservation practices should be mandatory because many farmers are not taking good care of their land.	0.5
Farmers' incomes vary greatly. Income stability could be increased through use of a bushel allotment and a carry-over plan.	0.5
Each farmer should be able to utilize all his land and more should be left idle.	0.5
I do not like the soil bank or other long term land retirement programs.	0.5
Those who make farm policy are too far removed from the farmers upon which the policy is implemented.	0.5
Farmers suffer a bad public image because of expenses included and the way expenses are charged to the Department of Agriculture.	0.5
Farmers should be able to swap cotton allotments for wheat allotments while keeping the same number of acres. This would help stabilize income when crop failure occurs.	0.5
Consumers should pay for farm products, not taxpayers.	0.5

TABLE VI (Continued)

Response	Percent
Certificate payments should not be increased or maybe they should be eliminated because they only increase taxes.	0.5
Present programs favor irrigated farmers through increased allotments and projected yield.	0.5
Imports are not regulated so that prices of farm products will rise to the point where the farmer can make a fair income.	0.5
The loan price of wheat (which sets the market price) is too low.	0.5
Why does the government have to tell the farmer what to do? Why not teach farmers to organize their own marketing groups and let them run their own business.	0.5
Present programs are voluntary in name only. Economically speaking the farmer cannot afford to stay out of the program.	0.5
Farmers should not be allowed to graze diverted acres that have been in grass for several years.	0.5

Nine and six-tenths percent of replies extended the idea that present allotments, bases, and projected yields were established inequitably and were unfair. Many farmers may have believed this but did not comment. Some farmers said, "Let the wheat farmer plant wheat; let the feed grain farmer plant feed grain; it's not fair to either one to contribute to the surplus of the other." Farmers again had several reasons for their beliefs. Allotments were established many years ago and now are outdated. When the history of allotments was taken on

their farm they were rotating crops and not planting all their cropland to wheat. And because the size of certificate payments was based on allotments, they were being penalized for soil conservation practices utilized at the time cropping records were taken to establish allotments. Others explained conserving base acres were established in a similar manner and still more felt that allotments should be based on a percentage of cropland on a farm. Some favored equal allotments on all farms. Projected yields seemed unfair to some farmers--a belief probably stemming from differences in projected yields attributable to diverse farming methods and soil types.

It was repeatedly emphasized that larger farmers were given an advantage over smaller farmers. Farmers making this criticism numbered 20.7 percent of total responses. Two reasons were cited. First, there was no limit to the certificate or direct payment which one operator could receive. Second, farmers could transfer allotments and bases from poor farms with relatively low projected yields to more productive farms by combining ASCS farm contracts and obtaining a higher projected yield on the allotment transferred. This increases the total certificate payment and places larger farmers in a more advantageous position because they are more likely to be financially able to transact larger financial maneuvers. This in turn causes the price of land to increase, permitting large farmers to further expand and gain competitive advantages over smaller farmers. Some farmers said that failure to limit the amount of certificate payments one operator may receive encouraged transfer of allotments.

Farm programs received criticism for changing too much from year to year and for late release of new programs. This criticism was aired

in 11.6 percent of replies. Changing programs and late program releases complicate long-term management decisions. The suggestion was made that longer term program be implemented. Farmers recommended that new programs be announced at least a year before they were to take effect.

Twenty-one and two-tenths percent of the replies expressed no discontent with present programs. Abstaining individuals either didn't want to answer the question or were satisfied with present programs.

Miscellaneous criticisms numbered 33.5 percent of total responses and are listed in Table VI. Some of these criticisms warrant discussion but should not be overemphasized. Four percent of farmers viewed present programs as an abstract, "blanket" program designed without due consideration for adaptation to specific locations. They felt the program offered little flexibility and believed alternatives for different areas of the nation should be offered. The government (through the Commodity Credit Corporation) was blamed for attempts to hold down farm product prices for consumers' benefits--a view indicated in 3.5 percent of criticisms. The government was criticized for telling the farmer it was doing one thing and attempting the opposite. Another 3.5 percent of responses indicated administration costs of government farm programs were excessive. Farmers believed program objectives were being overlooked because the farmer received such a small proportion of the money appropriated to the Department of Agriculture. Two and one-half percent of the responses said farmers thought farm programs were excessively complicated, with many useless restrictions. Another two percent criticized certificate payments. They explained landlords wanted part of all of certificate payments

because they believed the renter did not earn them. It was further explained certificate payments were made to farmers in areas like East Colorado who didn't try to harvest wheat unless they expected very good yields. Others criticized the government for not developing new markets and uses for farm products, for using short term, voluntary programs which were very expensive, and for differences in programs between states.

Recommended Changes in the Way Programs Are Administered by Their Local ASCS Office

The third open end question asked farmers was, "What changes would you like to see in the way programs are administered by the local ASCS?" It is interesting to note that 74.7 percent of the time farmers gave no answer or recommended no changes (Table VII). But 2.5 percent of the replies expressed discontent with continuation of ASCS office operations. The latter comment was usually given by farmers who favored a free market. Farmers recommending no changes often expressed the feeling the ASCS was only executing orders from a higher level and doing the best job possible under the circumstances.

Farmers also recommended ASCS employees become better informed of program alternatives so as to provide more accurate and consistent information on program alternatives. Presumably this change would decrease the number of trips farmers must make to ASCS offices.

Comments comprising 3.5 percent of the total recommended eliminating some of the technicalities of "sign up" for different programs and some of the technicalities within the program (sorghum sudangrass hybrids which are classified as feed grain can be used for forage, et cetera).

TABLE VII

CHANGES RECOMMENDED BY FARMERS IN THE WAY
PROGRAMS ARE ADMINISTERED BY THEIR LOCAL
ASCS OFFICE--RESPONSES BY PERCENTAGES

Response	Percent
1. None or no changes recommended.	74.7
2. Employees should be better informed of program alternatives and be consistent in telling the farmers what the program alternatives are. This would decrease the number of trips the farmers must make to the ASCS office.	6.1
3. The efficiency of the ASCS offices should be increased (to cut costs).	4.0
4. Eliminate unnecessary technicalities of sign up for different programs, papers, and technicalities within the programs.	3.5
5. Do away with government programs and ASCS offices.	2.5
6. Miscellaneous changes recommended:	10.5
Farmers should be allowed a small amount of tolerance (5%) on allotments or bases over planted. Those who are overplanted should be given the opportunity to comply with the permitted acreage before being disqualified for participation in the program.	2.0
Politics should be kept out of the ASCS offices. Some farmers get a much better deal on allotments, bases, and projected yields than do other farmers who don't have contracts.	1.5
Spread the authority in the ASCS office between more men. The office manager who sets all policies has caused some trouble in this county.	0.5
The local ASCS county committee should be given more control (at the expense of the federal government) to make programs more equitable.	0.5
Limit county committeemen to one term therefore rotating members.	0.5
Community committeemen should maintain closer contact with the county committee by conducting more meetings to explain new rules and regulations.	0.5

TABLE VII (Continued)

Response	Percent
The term of community committeemen should be three years.	0.5
Farmers should be provided more group schooling on programs so they can better understand program alternatives without having to ask. This should improve office efficiency.	0.5
All government offices in a town should be combined into one large office or complex of offices.	0.5
Certificate payments and diversion payments should be made in one check. This should decrease government costs.	0.5
An easier method should be provided for proving projected yields when an individual first undertakes operation of a new farm.	0.5
Stop giving a farmer a 35 bushel projected yield and his neighbor who farms across the field a 25 bushel projected yield.	0.5
The government should not make the rules and use an individual's neighbors to enforce those rules.	0.5
A program should be implemented which is based on a bushel allotment determined by county average yield and consisting of certificate payments (large enough to pay farmers a wage comparable to nonfarm workers) derived from a tax assessed on millers (a tax which will eventually be paid by consumers).	0.5
The payment on price support level for the cotton program should be announced before the sign up date for the program.	0.5
Wheat certificate payments should be paid one half at the time of sign up for the program like the cotton program.	0.5

Four percent of the recommendations dealt with inefficient ASCS office operation and inferred that government costs could be reduced through greater administrative efficiency.

Miscellaneous changes recommended comprised 10.5 percent of farmer replies and are listed in Table VII. None of these recommendations totaled more than 2.0 percent of the farmers interviewed, therefore will not be discussed.

Summary

Most farmers interviewed liked the general type of present government farm programs. Income support and decreased risk due to certificate payments were major reasons. Farmers explained that guaranteed receipt of certificate payments enabled fixed financial obligations to be met with greater certainty. Long-run management goals could be achieved with less financial risk. Many farmers liked the present programs because these permit considerable freedom from government control in their business operation. A number of farmers believed the programs were effective in controlling surpluses and increasing farm prices and income.

Those farmers who said they liked the voluntary participation, certificate payments, and flexibility permitted under current programs usually added that farm input costs were too high relative to farm product prices. This was the most frequently given criticism of farm programs and usually found roots in the individual farmer's problems. Farmers often viewed themselves as average or less than average size farmers. This opinion was apparent in their second most frequent criticism--large farmers hold a competitive advantage over smaller

farmers under the present programs. Some recommended a limit on government payments; others believed programs should not permit transfer of allotments from one farm to another. Farmers criticized programs for changing from one year to the next and criticized the Department of Agriculture for not developing long-term policies and informing farmers of them much sooner. Others leaned toward less government control and expressed a dislike for the inequitable distribution of benefits from programs through allotments, bases, and projected yields.

Other criticisms were: government programs are inconsistent; the government through the Commodity Credit Corporation is trying to hold the price of farm products low; program costs are excessive, yet the farmer receives little of the money appropriated to the Department of Agriculture; and programs are established on a national basis, are not flexible and involve too many useless restrictions.

Approximately three-fourths of the farmers interviewed said their local ASCS offices gave an adequate performance. Several even complimented offices for the job they were doing. Others discounted office actions and reasoned that local offices were only taking orders directed to them from above. Very few called for the termination of programs and local offices.

Farmers recommended increased employee efficiency and more informed personnel to better explain program alternatives. Some complained of the "red tape" involved in program compliance. Still others complained of small tolerance accepted in measuring allotments, of office politics, of authority vested in the office manager, and of the length of committeemen terms.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The Hypothesis

Underlying this study is the working hypothesis stated as follows: Characteristics of farmers are related to their preferences for government farm programs. This study attempts to explain farmers' acceptance and/or rejection of programs or parts of programs.

Interviews were conducted among farmers in four randomly selected counties in the major wheat producing areas of Oklahoma. A total of 198 usable interviews were taken in Grant, Harper, Texas and Tillman counties. Within each county farmers were selected at random in proportion to each county's participation in the 1967 Feed Grain Program. Farm managers were asked to indicate the extent of their approval or disapproval of statements describing selected government farm programs. Secondly, these preferences were related to certain socio-economic variables descriptive of farmers and their farm units.

Program Preferences

Only three of the ten programs presented to farmers received majority approval; two were voluntary programs and the other was an organization of farmers (independent of the government) which would control production so as to raise farm prices and income. The latter

has received considerable attention in recent years because of pressure to reduce the federal budget for programs and the campaign by the National Farmers Organization to control production. Many farmers while approving a farmer run bargaining organization did not anticipate control of such an organization could be strong enough to form an effective bargaining group.

Farmers seemed to like the present "type" programs; a proposal suggesting continuation of present programs received the second largest support among the programs presented to farmers. This proposal, however, ranked considerably lower than another voluntary program--essentially the current acreage diversion program for feed grains. It received greater approval than any presented to farmers--almost three-fourths approved.

A mandatory wheat-feed grain program used for wheat before 1964 and a proposal to terminate government controls received nearly the same degree of approval. Both proposals, however, received less approval than a long-term program utilizing land rental arrangements to retire land for ten to twenty years yet placing no restrictions on acreages of specific crops. Fewer than one-fourth of the farmers interviewed approved of another long-term program--a lease of wheat allotments and feed grain bases. Farmers strongly objected to the purchase of land by the government; this proposal ranked last among the ten programs presented to farmers.

The use of sealed bids to remove land from production at lower government cost received little support among farmers, who believed the level of diversion payments would be driven down. Most farmers also believed they would be disadvantaged if allotments and bases were made

negotiable. Reasons given were that landlords would sell allotments to larger farmers, production would increase, or they would be unable to repurchase their allotments and bases at a reasonable price.

Program Preferences Related to Characteristics of Farmers and Their Farm Units

The relationships between program preferences and characteristics of farmers (and their farm units) were not always clear and concise. Farmers seemed to prefer programs offering the greatest economic advantage--consistent with some level of government control they deemed acceptable.

Opportunity for retirement income offered by leasing allotments and bases to the government or renting cropland to the government under long-term land programs attracted older farmers. Both programs permit change from crop production enterprises to livestock enterprises which require less labor. Farmland acreages, cropland acreages and wheat allotments were larger for farmers who approved of all long-term programs--affording them larger payments than farmers operating smaller acreages. Many of these farmers had off-farm jobs or were semi-retired; it was found that a significant proportion of farm operators favoring a long-term land rental program and a government purchase program farmed less than full time. Those approving a long-term rental program unlike those in favor of terminating government controls seemed to be willing to accept a larger degree of government control, apparently to raise prices and decrease risks in farming. A significant proportion of those approving a long-term land retirement program believed the government should support the price of wheat. And as anticipated,

those approving of terminating government controls did not favor a government support price on wheat.

Preferences for a government support price on wheat were not significantly related to approval of a mandatory wheat-feed grain program of the type used for wheat before 1964. Gross farm income was higher for those approving the mandatory program but they believed their income possibilities in a non-farm job as compared to the income they were making from farming was greater than those who disapproved.

Those disapproving of a farm bargaining organization reported higher gross farm incomes while operating smaller farms. Apparently, larger farmers believed they could gain more through such an organization. A smaller proportion of those disapproving as compared to those approving stated intentions of farming at least five more years and evidently realized a bargaining organization was unlikely to be successful in the near future.

Those approving of program modifications to use sealed bids and make allotments and bases negotiable reported higher non-farm incomes. A larger proportion of Farmers Union than of Farm Bureau members approved negotiable allotments.

A Comparison of Farmers Strongly Approving of Selected Programs

Farmers strongly approving of long-term land retirement programs and present programs were older and more experienced. Those strongly favoring long-term retirement operated larger farmland acreages, cropland acreages, and wheat allotments than did those strongly approving of negotiable allotments and bases and the government lease of allotments and bases.

A high educational level was indicated by farmers strongly approving of both a mandatory program used for wheat before 1964 and termination of government controls. Farmers who strongly approved of a free market also spent a large proportion of time in non-farm employment. Their non-farm income was correspondingly high. Non-farm income was also high for those indicating extreme preference for a farm bargaining organization, a long-term land retirement program, and a free market. High gross farm incomes, however, were exhibited by farmers who strongly approved of continuing present programs, long term rental and lease programs, and a proposal to make allotments and bases negotiable.

Farmers' Comments on Present Programs and the Way They Are Administered

Reasons most often given in support of present government farm programs were sizable income support and risk reduction provided by guaranteed certificate payments. Support through certificate payments does not fluctuate with production, offering more assurance of meeting fixed financial obligations in the event of a crop failure. Many farmers liked the flexibility in management operations offered by "voluntary" programs.

Operators who expressed satisfaction with present type programs often criticized them for supporting farm product prices and income at a low level. Many believed that larger farmers are given the advantage under present programs. This feeling of a competitive advantage for the large farmers led to other criticisms on unlimited government payments and transferable allotments. The Department of Agriculture received criticism for not developing plans far enough in advance and for changing programs from year to year. Many respondents complained of

late information or lack of information when planning farm operations. Others complained of too much government involvement in agriculture while others expressed discord with inequitable distribution of program benefits through outdated wheat allotments, feed grain bases, and projected yields.

Only a small portion of farmers criticized administration of programs by local ASCS offices. Approximately three-fourths of the farmers interviewed pointed out local ASCS offices were doing all they could. Others reasoned orders were handed to local offices from higher levels in the Department of Agriculture.

Implications of the Study

A number of implications can be drawn from the results of this study:

1. Long term land retirement programs are desired by older farmers operating large acreages. Such programs seem to offer these individuals large diversion payments and the opportunity for retirement or a change to enterprises requiring less labor.
2. Farmers prefer specific programs which provide the highest farm prices and income consistent with an acceptable level of government control.
3. Voluntary programs have broad-based support among farmers interviewed.
4. Farmers favor certificate payments as a method of income support because the level of payments does not fluctuate with production, thus maintaining a more stable income.

5. Farmers are unhappy with the discontinuity in programs and with the advantage offered large farmers.
6. Farmers believe their local ASCS offices are administering programs in an acceptable manner.

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APPENDIX

TABLE VIII

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF FARM OPERATORS RELATED TO FIVE DEGREES OF GOVERNMENT FARM PROGRAM PREFERENCE¹, ITEMS ONE THROUGH FIVE

Variable	Unit	Item 1 ²					Item 2 ²					Item 3 ²					Item 4 ²					Item 5 ²				
		1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Operators interviewed	(Percent)	20	120	22	23	13	11	101	20	57	9	24	77	32	53	12	9	64	21	90	14	12	50	29	85	22
Average age	(Years)	49.7	50.2	54.4	49.4	54.9	59.1	52.1	46.9	48.8	48.2	51.2	50.7	48.2	53.6	45.3	59.1	52.0	54.2	48.7	49.3	46.8	52.9	49.2	50.5	51.4
Age distribution	(Years)																									
0-29		3	3	0	2	0	0	3	1	3	1	2	1	3	1	1	0	4	1	3	0	1	1	2	3	1
30-39		2	21	2	3	0	0	15	4	7	2	3	13	4	6	2	0	8	2	15	3	2	7	4	12	3
40-49		3	30	7	4	4	1	20	8	18	1	5	22	7	10	4	1	10	4	27	6	3	10	9	20	6
50-59		7	40	6	8	4	5	36	4	17	3	6	20	15	19	5	3	20	8	33	1	6	18	7	28	6
60-69		4	20	4	4	5	3	20	2	10	2	7	16	1	13	0	2	16	5	10	4	0	9	5	18	5
70-up		1	5	2	2	0	1	7	1	1	0	1	4	1	4	0	2	5	1	2	0	0	5	1	3	1
Years farming	(Years)	26.5	27.0	30.9	24.5	29.6	31.1	29.0	24.1	24.9	25.0	28.4	28.0	25.0	28.0	23.5	31.8	29.2	30.9	24.7	26.4	23.1	29.5	25.8	26.9	28.1
School completed	(Years)	11.9	11.5	11.3	11.2	11.7	11.2	11.2	11.6	11.6	13.2	11.4	11.6	12.1	10.8	12.0	11.0	11.3	11.2	11.5	13.3	12.7	10.8	12.0	11.2	12.6
Farm full time	(Yes)	15	94	17	18	9	7	78	17	45	6	18	61	22	44	8	4	53	13	75	8	10	36	21	72	14
	(No)	4	26	5	5	4	3	23	3	12	3	5	16	10	9	4	5	11	7	15	6	2	13	8	13	8
Farm next five years	(Yes)	18	111	22	21	13	11	90	20	55	9	23	72	32	46	12	9	57	18	87	14	12	46	27	78	22
	(No)	1	7	0	1	0	0	9	0	0	0	1	2	0	6	0	0	5	1	3	0	0	2	1	6	0
Share farm management	(Yes)	6	20	5	5	3	2	22	1	13	1	4	12	7	14	2	1	13	4	19	2	1	12	6	15	5
	(No)	14	98	17	18	10	9	78	19	43	8	20	64	25	38	10	8	49	17	71	12	11	38	22	69	17
Ave. no. weeks worked on the farm (1966)	(Weeks)	39.2	36.0	36.3	37.4	33.4	38.5	35.9	35.8	36.7	37.9	33.9	35.7	36.5	40.3	28.9	34.9	39.0	36.4	34.7	35.6	39.6	37.5	36.8	35.3	35.2
Weeks worked on the farm (1966)	(Weeks)																									
0-9		3	15	3	4	2	1	12	2	10	2	4	7	4	10	2	1	10	2	12	2	1	6	4	13	3
10-19		0	11	3	0	0	0	7	2	5	0	1	5	4	3	1	0	1	1	11	1	0	3	1	8	2
20-29		2	18	2	2	4	3	17	2	5	1	4	15	3	3	3	3	8	5	10	2	2	5	7	10	4
30-39		4	8	3	3	0	2	7	3	5	1	3	9	4	1	1	2	5	1	9	1	0	8	2	7	1
40-49		5	31	3	8	3	1	30	6	11	2	7	19	6	15	3	1	17	6	23	3	6	14	5	21	4
50-up		6	37	8	6	4	4	28	5	21	3	5	22	11	21	2	2	23	6	25	5	3	14	10	26	8
Ave. no. weeks unpaid family labor used on the farm (1966)	(Weeks)	5.7	4.3	7.4	3.6	11.0	5.9	4.6	4.2	6.5	4.2	5.1	5.3	5.2	5.0	4.7	4.2	4.0	5.0	5.7	7.6	10.8	3.7	5.7	5.1	4.9
Ave. no. weeks hired labor used on farm (1966)	(Weeks)	17.4	11.4	13.3	7.0	22.2	17.5	12.0	12.0	12.1	12.9	10.0	12.0	18.5	10.6	11.4	24.3	18.8	10.8	7.7	7.9	13.7	12.5	12.7	10.6	17.9
Ave. no. days worked off the farm (1966)	(Days)	47.3	58.8	67.9	61.4	102.4	25.4	63.8	57.5	64.9	73.3	81.0	55.9	78.5	44.6	92.3	66.7	55.0	63.7	57.1	116.8	77.4	51.3	51.2	59.7	98.9
Non-farm income (1966, distribution)	(Dollars)																									
None		3	26	5	3	3	3	20	2	13	2	3	11	9	15	2	1	14	5	18	2	2	10	9	16	3
1-499		3	16	6	5	1	1	19	3	6	2	4	16	3	8	0	0	8	3	18	2	1	8	3	16	3
500-999		5	11	3	4	2	4	13	4	3	1	3	11	4	6	1	4	8	3	9	1	1	4	5	13	2
1000-1999		2	18	2	5	2	0	15	6	7	1	1	17	3	4	4	0	8	3	16	2	4	11	2	10	2
2000-4999		5	27	1	2	0	1	13	4	17	0	5	11	7	9	3	2	10	3	18	2	1	10	4	16	4
Over 5000		2	20	4	4	5	2	21	1	8	3	8	10	6	9	2	2	16	4	8	5	3	6	4	14	8
Farmers reporting membership in:	(Number)																									
Farmers Union		1	22	3	3	1	2	19	2	6	1	2	16	5	5	2	2	12	3	13	0	2	10	3	14	1
Farm Bureau		5	52	8	10	4	2	40	6	26	5	10	31	14	23	1	3	23	10	35	8	2	21	14	33	9

TABLE VIII (Continued)

Variable	Unit	Item 1 ²					Item 2 ²					Item 3 ²					Item 4 ²					Item 5 ²				
		1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Favor support price on wheat	(Yes) (No)	16 3	93 23	19 3	17 6	10 3	7 ⁴ 4	86 ⁷ 11	19 1	38 ⁵ 18	5 ⁶ 4	17 7	60 17	26 4	41 9	11 1	7 ⁵ 2	56 6	19 1	64 24	9 ⁶ 5	11 1	43 7	25 4	61 19	15 7
Ave. suggested wheat price support level	(Dollars/bushel)	2.26	2.32	2.33	2.23	2.46	2.42	2.24	2.63	2.36	2.11	2.46	2.42	2.12	2.29	2.01	2.77	2.29	2.35	2.31	1.99	2.38	2.53	2.12	2.27	2.15
Ave. wheat price expected at harvest (1968)	(Dollars/bushel)	1.40	1.41	1.35	1.43	1.48	2.42	2.24	2.63	2.36	2.11	1.47	1.40	1.46	1.38	1.35	2.77	2.29	2.35	2.31	1.99	1.39	1.40	1.39	1.40	1.51
Ave. wheat price expected in five years	(Dollars/bushel)	1.81	1.75	1.63	1.51	2.21	1.42	1.41	1.44	1.41	1.39	1.97	1.62	1.94	1.65	1.82	1.37	1.40	1.36	1.43	1.46	1.56	1.79	1.75	1.68	1.97
Average fair wheat price	(Dollars/bushel)	2.52	2.59	2.60	2.61	2.92	2.59	2.46	2.95	2.76	2.59	2.66	2.71	2.43	2.59	2.45	2.89	2.61	2.49	2.63	2.48	2.70	2.74	2.40	2.59	2.61
Income possibilities in a non-farm job as compared to farming	(No. better) (No. same) (No. worse)	2 4 13	20 31 61	4 8 9	7 3 10	1 1 8	0 2 8	14 22 56	5 5 10	13 16 24	2 2 3	6 3 12	16 17 38	5 8 17	6 14 29	1 5 5	0 3 5	11 16 33	4 4 11	18 18 47	1 6 5	2 1 8	10 16 21	0 10 18	18 14 46	4 6 8
Ave. farm land	(Acres)	620	792	732	616	995	980	741	815	767	562	767	845	731	663	723	975	844	1003	646	622	819	745	713	770	796
Average crop land	(Acres)	440	456	428	316	669	610	441	515	416	402	476	456	465	441	340	656	516	621	351	379	524	431	424	460	440
Ave. wheat allotment	(Acres)	277	350	364	255	435	377	319	311	304	280	325	331	314	315	204	422	311	407	290	295	374	313	280	320	316
Total gross farm income (1966, distribution)																										
Under 2500	(Dollars)	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
2500-4999		3	12	2	0	2	0	8	3	7	1	5	5	3	4	2	0	3	2	13	1	2	5	6	5	1
5000-9999		2	25	6	7	1	0	28	4	8	1	2	22	5	11	1	1	13	7	18	2	3	7	5	25	1
10,000-19,999		9	47	5	8	5	8	33	8	23	2	10	24	15	16	9	4	20	5	36	7	1	20	6	31	16
20,000-39,999		4	24	7	5	3	3	22	4	11	3	5	16	8	14	0	4	17	5	13	4	4	12	7	17	3
Over 40,000		2	11	1	2	1	0	8	1	6	2	1	8	1	7	0	0	9	1	7	0	1	5	4	6	1
Net farm income (1966, distribution)																										
Under 0	(Dollars)	0	1	1	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	1	1	0
0-999		2	8	2	5	1	1	10	1	6	0	2	8	1	6	1	0	5	2	11	0	2	4	2	10	0
1000-2999		3	37	3	5	4	3	24	6	16	3	6	24	6	11	5	3	12	5	28	4	1	16	8	21	6
3000-6999		11	51	12	11	4	7	44	8	26	4	12	29	17	25	6	5	29	9	39	7	4	22	10	39	14
Over 7000		4	22	3	2	2	0	21	3	7	2	2	14	7	10	0	1	17	4	9	2	3	8	7	13	2

¹ Items (government farm programs) are described as follows: Item 1. Wheat and feed grains would be under a voluntary acreage diversion program. Each individual farmer would be free to decide each year if he wants to receive payment to divert land from his crop allotment and be eligible for price supports; Item 2. Continue the present wheat and feed grain programs with price support loan and marketing certificates for wheat; Item 3. An organization of farmers themselves (independent of the government) would control production so as to raise farm prices and incomes; Item 4. The government would pay farmers for long term (10 or 20 years) land retirement. There would be no acreage controls on specific crops, but the amount of land retired; Item 5. Wheat and feed grains would be subject to mandatory acreage controls of the type used for wheat before 1964. All farmers would be required to comply with allotments if approved in a national referendum.

² Under each item, Column 1 represents those farm operators who "strongly approved", Column 2. "approve", Column 3. "undecided", Column 4. "disapprove", and Column 5. "strongly disapprove".

³ Significant at $\alpha = .001$

⁴ Significant at $\alpha = .01$

⁵ Significant at $\alpha = .02$

⁶ Significant at $\alpha = .05$

⁷ Significant at $\alpha = .10$

TABLE IX

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF FARM OPERATORS RELATED TO FIVE DEGREES OF GOVERNMENT FARM PROGRAM PREFERENCE¹, ITEMS SIX THROUGH TEN

Variable	Unit	Item 6 ²					Item 7 ²					Item 8 ²					Item 9 ²					Item 10 ²				
		1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Operators interviewed	(Percent)	21	36	29	83	29	7	41	33	65	52	5	33	39	83	38	9	23	11	91	64	1	8	9	82	98
Average age	(Years)	49.3	49.5	48.4	52.9	49.8	50.0	54.1	50.5	50.8	48.5	52.0	54.2	53.7	48.7	49.4	46.8	55.9	52.0	50.3	50.1	27.0	58.7	48.1	53.7	48.2
Age distribution																										
0-29	(Years)	2	2	1	0	3	2	1	1	1	3	1	0	1	5	1	2	0	0	2	4	1	1	0	1	5
30-39		2	7	6	12	1	0	5	5	9	0	4	5	14	5	0	1	2	17	8	0	1	2	10	15	
40-49		7	7	7	17	10	1	4	8	20	15	0	6	8	24	10	2	5	3	22	16	0	0	3	15	
50-59		5	11	9	31	9	2	15	12	21	15	3	12	10	25	15	4	9	3	27	22	0	1	3	27	
60-69		4	6	5	18	4	0	12	6	10	9	0	9	10	12	6	1	5	3	17	11	0	2	1	22	
70-up		1	2	0	5	1	2	3	1	3	1	1	2	4	3	0	0	3	0	5	2	0	3	0	6	
Years farming	(Years)	25.7	26.4	25.7	28.7	27.0	29.0	30.4	25.7	27.8	25.0	29.0	31.5	29.7	25.0	25.9	21.9	32.3	31.4	25.1	28.6	13.0	34.7	25.0	30.1	
School completed	(Years)	12.5	11.3	11.7	11.3	11.1	11.0	11.2	11.5	11.3	12.0	11.6	10.9	11.3	11.6	12.0	12.6	11.5	11.0	11.2	11.8	15.0	9.7	12.1	11.1	
Farm full time	(Yes)	15	26	25	62	25	4	31	24	52	42	4	22	31	67	29	6	14	8	73	52	0	5	4	64	
	(No)	6	9	4	21	4	3	10	8	13	10	1	11	8	16	8	2	9	3	18	12	1	2	5	18	
Farm next five years	(Yes)	21	32	29	75	28	7	35	30	62	51	5	30	35	77	38	9	22	10	81	63	1	6	9	71	
	(No)	0	3	0	5	1	0	5	1	2	1	0	1	3	5	0	0	1	1	6	1	0	2	0	7	
Share farm management	(Yes)	6	9	5	11	8	1	6	5	12	15	2	5	6	16	10	2	3	2	16	16	0	2	2	13	
	(No)	15	27	24	70	21	6	34	28	52	37	3	28	32	66	28	7	19	9	74	48	1	6	7	67	
Ave. no. weeks worked on the farm (1966)	(Weeks)	33.1	33.0	38.7	37.2	37.6	36.7	39.0	36.0	32.7	38.9	36.0	32.6	36.9	36.5	38.9	40.4	28.5	33.7	36.6	38.4	20.0	32.0	26.0	36.3	
Weeks worked on the farm (1966)																										
0-9	(Weeks)	8	6	2	8	3	1	4	6	11	5	1	4	3	13	6	0	5	0	14	8	0	2	2	10	
10-19		0	5	1	5	3	0	4	3	6	1	0	4	3	5	2	0	4	0	8	2	0	1	1	6	
20-29		1	4	6	13	4	2	4	4	10	8	2	5	7	11	3	3	3	6	8	8	1	1	3		
30-39		2	2	5	8	1	1	1	3	7	6	0	3	5	6	4	0	5	1	5	7	0	0	1		
40-49		5	9	6	23	7	1	13	4	19	13	0	11	5	25	9	0	2	0	31	17	0	2	1		
50-up		5	10	9	26	11	2	15	13	12	19	2	6	16	23	14	6	4	4	25	22	0	2	1		
Ave. no. weeks unpaid family labor used on the farm (1966)	(Weeks)	7.8	2.9	5.2	4.5	7.8	8.7	3.3	7.6	5.3	4.4	4.0	5.4	4.4	4.2	8.1	8.8	7.9	12.5	3.4	4.8	0	1.5	15.7	2.6	
Ave. no. weeks hired labor used on farm (1966)	(Weeks)	10.5	7.2	14.1	14.1	13.5	17.6	12.5	10.5	11.7	13.6	7.4	8.4	13.6	11.5	17.2	22.8	18.9	7.9	9.4	13.5	10.0	9.6	8.6	12.4	
Ave. no. days worked off the farm (1966)	(Days)	99.6	78.0	51.0	52.3	52.2	81.4	61.8	66.7	60.5	57.6	48.0	78.3	33.1	62.3	77.6	80.0	81.8	90.4	56.5	54.6	240.0	43.7	179.4	46.1	
Non-farm income (1966, distribution)																										
None	(Dollars)	5	5	4	19	7	2	6	9	14	9	2	2	13	18	5	4	5	3	17	11	0	1	1	17	
1-499		1	8	5	12	5	0	9	5	9	8	0	4	7	14	6	1	2	2	14	12	0	1	1	12	
500-999		3	7	7	10	3	1	5	1	9	9	1	4	9	6	5	1	3	1	13	7	0	0	0	16	
1000-1999		2	4	6	11	6	0	4	4	11	10	0	8	2	11	8	0	1	1	14	13	0	2	2	8	
2000-4999		4	10	3	13	5	3	7	8	10	7	2	5	3	19	6	2	1	0	18	14	1	1	1	12	
Over 5000		6	6	3	17	3	1	9	6	11	8	0	10	5	12	8	1	11	3	13	7	0	3	4	15	
Farmers reporting membership in:																										
Farmers Union	(Number)	1	5	7	12	5	1	8	5	10	6	0	9	7	12	2	1	8	0	14	7	0	1	1	16	
Farm Bureau		9	16	10	34	10	0	21	13	21	24	2	15	15	31	16	2	6	4	36	29	0	3	1	33	

TABLE IX (Continued)

Variable	Unit	Item 6 ²					Item 7 ²					Item 8 ²					Item 9 ²					Item 10 ²				
		1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Favor support price on wheat	(Yes) (No)	8 13	25 8	21 8	76 6	25 3	7 0	33 7	26 6	49 14	40 11	4 1	28 4	31 8	64 15	28 10	7 2	16 6	11 0	72 16	49 14	1 0	7 1	9 0	68 11	70 26
Ave. suggested wheat price support level	(Dollars/bushel)	2.36	2.42	2.46	2.22	2.35	2.64	2.37	2.08	2.40	2.25	2.52	2.44	2.11	2.36	2.24	2.03	2.21	1.94	2.36	2.40	2.30	2.32	2.25	2.30	2.34
Ave. wheat price expected at harvest (1968)	(Dollars/bushel)	1.44	1.39	1.41	1.42	1.39	1.35	1.45	1.35	1.39	1.45	1.42	1.43	1.36	1.41	1.45	1.35	1.40	1.35	1.40	1.45	1.48	1.39	1.33	1.41	1.42
Ave. wheat price expected in five years	(Dollars/bushel)	1.71	1.64	1.71	1.80	1.79	2.04	1.83	1.66	1.57	1.90	2.19	1.73	1.68	1.66	1.94	1.72	1.63	1.47	1.70	1.92	1.75	1.86	1.55	1.65	1.84
Average fair wheat price	(Dollars/bushel)	2.72	2.74	2.69	2.52	2.55	2.94	2.66	2.43	2.64	2.60	2.58	2.80	2.42	2.64	2.57	2.44	2.41	2.25	2.66	2.67	2.50	2.75	2.64	2.58	2.62
Income possibilities in a non-farm job as compared to farming	(No. better) (No. same) (No. worse)	5 4 7	8 8 15	7 6 15	12 23 46	2 6 18	0 2 5	8 8 21	4 13 15	15 12 32	7 12 28	0 0 5	7 8 14	4 15 20	16 14 46	7 10 16	0 2 7	0 7 12	1 5 5	19 20 44	14 13 33	0 0 1	1 4 3	2 3 3	13 18 44	18 22 50
Average farm land	(Acres)	725	511	790	820	899	857	856	865	630	771	631	884	767	679	844	1022	600	819	769	761	160	757	847	721	793
Average crop land	(Acres)	334	287	471	489	596	737	520	470	338	479	493	532	534	367	462	596	355	642	436	446	125	577	466	416	468
Ave. wheat allotment	(Acres)	245	213	330	354	366	416	321	325	270	348	325	360	361	263	392	396	208	437	318	317	96	357	351	293	329
Total gross farm income (1966, distribution)																										
Under 2500	(Dollars)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
2500-4999		3	4	2	7	3	1	5	2	5	6	1	5	2	9	2	1	1	1	9	7	1	2	0	5	11
5000-9999		4	10	3	19	5	1	10	9	17	4	0	9	10	17	5	0	8	1	23	9	0	2	3	21	15
10,000-19,999		10	13	13	30	8	2	13	14	22	23	4	9	13	30	18	5	9	5	27	28	0	2	4	26	42
20,000-39,999		2	6	7	19	9	3	9	4	18	9	0	7	9	17	10	2	4	3	21	13	0	2	1	23	17
Over 40,000		2	1	3	8	3	0	3	3	3	8	0	3	4	8	2	1	1	0	9	6	0	0	1	5	11
Net farm income (1966, distribution)																										
Under 0	(Dollars)	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
0-999		3	3	3	6	3	0	4	4	5	5	1	3	3	10	1	1	2	1	9	5	0	1	0	9	8
1000-2999		4	14	4	26	4	2	13	6	22	9	0	13	8	21	10	2	8	4	25	13	0	3	4	25	20
3000-6999		12	14	16	34	13	3	15	17	28	26	4	10	18	37	20	2	11	3	36	36	1	2	2	33	51
Over 7000		1	4	4	17	7	2	7	6	9	9	0	7	9	13	4	3	2	2	18	8	0	2	3	14	14

¹ Items (government farm programs) are described as follows: Item 6. All government controls and price supports would be terminated, and the farm economy would be on a free market; Item 7. The government would lease the rights to grow wheat crops and feed grains on a farm. Then this farm could no longer grow wheat or feed grains for the life of the lease. The owner could use the land for any other purposes, including the production of other crops; Item 8. A farmer would submit sealed bids to the ASCS showing the payment required for him to divert land from production. The ASCS would accept those bids from farmers that would remove the most production per dollar spent by the government; Item 9. Wheat and feed grain allotments could be bought and sold among farmers, so that allotments would eventually end up in the hands of those who would make the best use of them. Item 10. The government would buy whole farms and combine several farms to be used for public recreation or leased for grazing.

² Under each item, Column 1 represents those farm operators who "strongly approved", Column 2 "approve", Column 3. "undecided", Column 4. "disapprove", and Column 5. "strongly disapprove".

³ Significant at $\alpha = .001$

⁴ Significant at $\alpha = .01$

⁵ Significant at $\alpha = .02$

⁶ Significant at $\alpha = .05$

⁷ Significant at $\alpha = .10$

VITA

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