

A STUDY OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS'
COGNITION AND APPRAISAL OF
THE OKLAHOMA COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION SERVICE

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PREFACE

The Cooperative Extension Service is constantly faced with the challenge of securing sufficient funds with which to carry out its educational programs. Traditionally, extension funds have derived from three sources: local, state and federal government. In Oklahoma, county commissioners are responsible for allocating funds at the local level with which to do extension work. County contributions to county extension budgets in Oklahoma ranged from five to fifty-three percent during the 1966-1967 fiscal year.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between county commissioners' cognition and appraisal of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service and financial support to extension work. Selected classification variables were also analyzed in relation to cognition and appraisal scores.

The writer wishes to express appreciation to all those who assisted in the completion of this study, particularly to the writer's committee, Dr. Richard P. Jungers, Chairman; Dr. Robert R. Price, and Dr. J. C. Egermeier. Sincere appreciation is also expressed to Dr. J. C. Evans, Vice-President for Extension, and to the District Extension Directors of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service for their valuable assistance in preparation for and execution of this investigation. The writer is also indebted to County Extension staffs in Oklahoma for their cooperation during the process of collecting the necessary data.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Any public organization striving to be of service is vitally concerned with the image various clientele groups hold regarding it. The Cooperative Extension Service is no exception. As a public agency, the Cooperative Extension Service has made certain impressions on the people who have come into contact with it throughout its half century of existence. These contacts with the Extension Service had differential effects on the people due to differences in their background, experience, and involvement with extension programs and activities as well as the perceived effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the organization. Statements by eminent persons and prior studies indicate differences of opinion of what extension is or should be (5, p. 47).

Although restricted to specific clientele by legislative definition (24, p. 426), the Cooperative Extension Service has many audiences or publics which it attempts to serve. No public agency can be "all things to all people"; nevertheless the Cooperative Extension Service is concerned about the public's understanding and appraisal of the organization in an ever changing milieu that calls for dramatic adjustments on the part of servers and served.

The Cooperative Extension Service, created by the Smith-Lever Act of 1914, is a cooperative arrangement between federal, state and county government. As such, funds for financing extension work derive from

all three levels of government. Since the inception of the organization, local or county sponsorship of the extension program has been of major importance. Campbell (9, p. 2) states, "When the Cooperative Extension Service was established in 1914, individual counties rapidly became established as the local units of operation for accomplishing the goals of the organization." He further suggests that a significant factor leading to strong identification of extension work with individual counties has been appropriation of a share of the funds necessary for the conduct of extension work from county tax revenues.

The idea of local financial support for extension work was conceived and based on the local support in the cooperative demonstration program devised and supervised by Seaman A. Knapp (30). Mr. Knapp's program called for local financial support as well as contributions by both state and federal governments.

Although local sponsorship of extension work has assumed different arrangements from state to state in the past, for the most part, local government officials have been called on to participate in financing extension work. County commissioners are the official representatives who constitute the local governing body in each county in many states. Although known by different titles in some of the other states, this body performs essentially the same functions.

In Oklahoma, county commissioners occupy a strong position of leadership in the conduct of Cooperative Extension work in each of the 77 counties throughout the state. Because of this influential role, their cognition and appraisal of the organization is considered extremely important in relation to their continued support of the work. Prior research studies suggest that their backgrounds, impressions,

experiences, and a host of other factors constantly interact to shape their current cognition and appraisal of the Cooperative Extension Service.

Nature of the Problem

Since the establishment of the Cooperative Extension Service over 50 years ago, many changes in the American scene have occurred. Oklahoma, along with the rest of the nation, has shared in many of these trends, shifts, and winds of change.

At the turn of the century, over 90 percent of Oklahoma's population was rural. According to the 1960 census, approximately 40 percent of Oklahoma's people were classed as rural. During the 1950-1960 decade, Oklahoma registered the largest decrease of its rural population of any state in the United States, losing 21 percent (12, p. 52). This loss of population from rural areas was largely due to advances in agricultural technology, mechanization, and the emergence of industrialism in urban areas where it was felt that economic opportunities were greater. Of those who stayed on the farm, there has been a steady increase in the percentage of farm operators who have found it necessary to work off the farm 100 days or more each year to supplement farm income.

These shifts in population, social and economic patterns have necessitated some adjustments by the Extension Service in its organization, structure, training, activities, subject matter, programs, and qualifications of persons employed. Due to these changes, it is felt that county commissioners may have an inadequate understanding of the Extension Service or an image of the organization which is

incongruent with present objectives and programs. It is expected that county commissioners' appraisal of the Extension Service may be the result of their background, experience and a preconceived image which has persisted through the years.

Specific Statement of the Problem

Although the financial arrangements of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service are somewhat unique, it is as a public agency nonetheless dependent upon public governing bodies for the bulk of its financial support. With the ever increasing competition for the Federal tax dollar, it becomes necessary to survey other possibilities for funding extension work. The same situation exists at the state level. With each of the twenty-five budgetary agencies, of which Cooperative Extension is one, seeking maximum funds from the total amount allocated by the legislature to Higher Education in Oklahoma, the financial squeeze becomes critical. Even at the county level, many worthy needs compete for the limited amount of funds available.

The Cooperative Extension Service budget for Oklahoma in 1966 was approximately \$4.5 million. It came from the following sources: Federal appropriation, 40%; State appropriations, 42%; and County appropriations, 18%. In comparison, the average throughout the United States was: Federal, 37%; State, 41%; and County, 22%. This comparison indicates that Oklahoma is 4% below the national average in county support to Cooperative Extension work.

Bell (3, p. 140) has stated, "Tax supported institutions are constantly involved in competition for the tax dollar. Success in this competition depends upon the public image of the institution and its

programs as well as upon the image held by members of the legislative bodies."

The foregoing comment suggests the imperativeness of any publicly supported agency or organization to attempt to periodically assess its image. Since the Oklahoma Extension Service increasingly seeks more tax dollars from all levels of government with which to carry on its educational programs, it seems worthwhile to assess the organizational image held by those who control financial allocations. The immediate concern of the writer is to investigate one level, county government, in an attempt to determine county commissioners' cognition and appraisal of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service. Although, technically speaking, they do not constitute a legislative body, county commissioners do wield considerable influence, financial and otherwise, over Extension work in most counties. Campbell (9, p. 5) states, "A board of three elected county commissioners is responsible in each county for allocation of the county tax revenue. They directly determine the amount of county funds which extension presently receives, and any increase in county funds for extension must meet their favor."

It may be that the relatively low financial contribution which some county commissioners make to extension work is due to a lack of understanding as to its organizational make-up, its goals, its clientele, its financial arrangements, its programs, as well as other facets of the organization. Another possibility is that county commissioners do have an adequate cognition of the Oklahoma Extension Service but do not hold it in high esteem or favor due to a different value orientation. Still another possibility is that county commissioners have a generally favorable attitude toward the Oklahoma

Extension Service, however, do not like its present form in view of the many recent changes which it has undergone. A further alternative is that, although county commissioners have an adequate cognition of and favorable attitude toward the Oklahoma Extension Service, they are hampered in making a greater financial contribution to Extension work due to low county valuation or tax base.

Classification Variables of Concern

This study will attempt to determine what factors or variables appear to be associated with different cognitions and attitudes of county commissioners toward the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service. The variables of (1) age, (2) occupation, (3) tenure as a county commissioner, (4) level of education attained, and (5) involvement with extension personnel or programs will be analyzed in relation to cognition and appraisal scores.

Purpose of the Study

In a recent study by Campbell (9, p. 65) of Oklahoma county commissioners' attitudes toward area specialized extension agents, he recommends, "In view of the changes which have recently been made in Oklahoma, some assessment of the level of understanding which county commissioners have of the Cooperative Extension Service in Oklahoma should be made."

The purpose of this study is to determine the level of understanding which selected county commissioners have of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service and their evaluation of the organization as a public agency spending appropriated funds.

Specifically, answers to the following questions will be sought.

1. What is county commissioners' cognition of the purpose, organizational structure, and financing of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service?
2. What is the cognition of county commissioners regarding the amount of time and effort that Cooperative Extension should devote to various clientele groups and the relative importance of certain county director activities.
3. What is the cognition and appraisal of county commissioners concerning the programs and professional staff of the Cooperative Extension Service?
4. What is the relationship between county commissioners' cognition and appraisal of the Cooperative Extension Service and their level of financial support to extension work?
5. What classification variables appear to be associated with differences in level of knowledge about and appraisal of the Extension Service?

Significance of the Study

The information gained from this study could be very beneficial to the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service administration as a means of strengthening and improving the organization's effectiveness. It should provide valuable information about areas of Extension work where county commissioners are either uninformed or misinformed. Further, it should serve as a useful indication of the attitudes of county commissioners toward the Extension Service. The image of

Extension as reflected by this study could serve as a basis for initiating a public relations program with county commissioners to provide them with accurate information concerning the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service.

Definition of Terms

1. Cognition: As used in this study means anything that is known or perceived (32, p. 284). The terms "knowledge" and "understanding" will be used occasionally throughout the text, interchangeably with "cognition."
2. Appraisal: As used in this study will refer to the value of the Cooperative Extension Service as seen by county commissioners.
3. Cooperative Extension Service: The organization created by the Smith-Lever Act of 1914. Since this study is limited to Oklahoma, it is to be understood as referring only to this state unless otherwise designated. The terms, "Extension", "Extension Service", and "extension work" will occasionally be used and are to be thought of as synonymous with the defined term.
4. High Level Group: Shall refer to the six counties selected to the sample from the top one third of the counties ranked by percentage of extension budget contributed by county government during 1966-67.
5. Middle Level Group: Shall refer to the six counties selected to the sample from the middle one third of the counties ranked by percentage of extension budget contributed by county government during 1966-67.
6. Low Level Group: Shall refer to the six counties selected to the sample from the lower one third of the counties ranked by percent-

age of extension budget contributed by county government during 1966-67.

7. Knowledge Score: The score derived from a subject's responses to pre-selected items on the interview schedule, reflective of the subject's cognition of the Cooperative Extension Service.
8. Appraisal Score: The score derived from a subject's responses to pre-selected items on the interview schedule, reflective of the subject's evaluation of the Cooperative Extension Service.
9. Involvement Score: The score derived from a subject's responses to items on the interview schedule indicative of the subject's experience and involvement with the Cooperative Extension Service.

Organization of Remainder of Study

A general framework for the study, including a review of selected literature may be found in Chapter II. The methodology and procedure for the study is presented in Chapter III.

Presentation of the data is descriptive material found in Chapter IV. Chapter V contains an analysis of knowledge and appraisal score data.

Summary, conclusions, and recommendations are given in Chapter VI.

CHAPTER II

GENERAL FRAMEWORK AND RELATED INFORMATION

Brief History of the Cooperative Extension Service

The understanding of an organization is increased through a knowledge of its history (24, p. 13). A brief review of the history of the Cooperative Extension Service and its antecedents will aid in placing the present study in its proper context.

The Cooperative Extension Service had its roots in activities which preceded it by nearly one hundred thirty years. Kelsey and Hearne (14) describe extension work as growing out of an historical situation. The United States as a young nation was primarily agricultural. The early years was a period of pioneering and change in agriculture and homemaking (24).

Many of the country's notable leaders were agriculturalists. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Daniel Webster were among those who were vitally concerned with the better practice of agriculture (24).

Kelsey and Hearne (14) suggest that extension work is largely the result of two great forces -- American agriculture and American education.

A forerunner of extension work was the organization of early agricultural societies designed to disseminate agricultural information. The first organized activity in the United States in agricultural

education was the development of the Philadelphia Agricultural Society in 1785 (24, p. 13). Others developed through time. These contributed to the development of farmers' institutes. A farmers' institute was a community meeting of several days duration, devoted to a discussion of agricultural problems and subjects relating to the home (24, p. 13).

With the establishment of the United States Department of Agriculture in 1862 and the Land Grant College System, also in 1862, extension educational activities in agriculture were further enhanced. Increased state and federal funds were channeled to farmers' institutes to aid them. Along with their part in farmers' institutes, the agricultural colleges independently undertook various forms of extension work such as field demonstrations, cooperative experiments, extension and lectures (14, p. 15).

Immediately preceding the formal establishment of Cooperative Extension work, was the appearance of the farm demonstrator or county agent in various parts of the United States. These "agricultural representatives" were employed by a variety of organizations and groups including the federal government, banks, and railroads, counties, land grant colleges, chambers of commerce and farmer organizations (30, pp. 49-99).

All of these efforts finally culminated in the formal establishment of extension work. Sanders (24, p. 22) describes it this way: "Slowly the possibility and opportunity for a nationwide, out-of-school, educational system was developing. Slowly sentiment crystallized for federal support of such a system. This sentiment resulted in the passage of the Smith-Lever Act in 1914, which authorized Cooperative Extension work in agriculture and home economics."

The Scope Report (29, p. 3) of 1958 states, "Cooperative Extension work in agriculture and home economics is a partnership undertaking between each state land grant college or university and the United States Department of Agriculture in cooperation with local governments and local people."

The major function of the Cooperative Extension Service as stated in the Smith-Lever Act is: "--to aid in diffusing among the people of the United States useful and practical information on subjects relating to agriculture and home economics, and to encourage the application of the same ----" (29, p. 3).

Clearly, the task of the Cooperative Extension Service is one of education. Understanding the basic purpose and philosophy of extension work prompted writers of the Scope Report to state, "The Cooperative Extension Service is the informal educational arm of both the Department of Agriculture and the respective state land grant colleges and universities" (29, p. 4).

In performing its assigned mission, the Cooperative Extension Service aims at helping people to help themselves in attaining more efficient farms, better homes, higher incomes, richer living, and competency in group action (29).

Its history of success has caused it to be described recently "as one of the oldest, probably the largest, certainly the most fully developed and perhaps the most effective adult education activity in the United States" (25, p. 43).

The significance of the term "cooperative" in the name of the organization is in the joint agreement between federal, state, and local governments for the conduct of the work. Although the original

legislation did not specifically define the role of local people, the primary recipients of extension services, they were, nevertheless, expected to share in the funding of the work. Soon after the establishment of Cooperative Extension work Soule (28, p. 113) commented, "If the county provides the funds, the local interest and support will be much stronger than if operating funds are regarded as an appropriation out of general revenue."

The foregoing quotation indicates one of the real strengths of extension work. Soule further suggests that with the county as a unit, the work of the extension division should be promoted in harmony with the local government and with the support of the county officials who are elected by the people and who will control the appropriation of the county funds needed for the work.

The county unit, in fact, soon did become the operational unit through which Extension programs were carried out. Throughout the half century history of the organization, extension work has maintained a strong identity with the county as the local unit of government.

The Relationship of County Commissioners To Extension Work in Oklahoma

The Oklahoma Statutes declare: "The powers of a county as a body politic and corporate shall be exercised by its Board of County Commissioners" (20, p. 1271). Oklahoma has 77 counties, each of which is divided into three districts, with one county commissioner elected from each district for a two year term.

The Oklahoma Higher Education Code delineates certain legal responsibilities which the Board of County Commissioners have in relation to the conduct of extension work (19, p. 28).

The Board of County Commissioners of the respective counties of the State may, and are hereby authorized and empowered to contract and agree with the Department of Agriculture of the United States of America and Oklahoma State University of Agriculture and Applied Science, or with the authorized agent or agents of said Department of Agriculture and said University to cooperate with the Department of Agriculture and the University in conducting farm demonstration work and home demonstration work including 4-H club work in their respective counties under such rules and regulations as may be prescribed jointly by the Department of Agriculture and Oklahoma State University of Agriculture and Applied Science. Such agreement shall be in writing, signed by the members of the board of county commissioners and the authorized agent of the United States Department of Agriculture and Oklahoma State University of Agriculture and Applied Science, and may be entered into at any regular or adjourned session of said board, after the 30th day of June of each year. Provided, that the board of county commissioners shall provide an adequate amount in their annual estimate for the ensuing year to carry out the provisions of such contract, same to be included in the salary fund and expense fund to be paid on order of the board of county commissioners to such workers as may be agreed upon between said board of county commissioners and the authorized agent of the Department of Agriculture and the University to carry on said farm demonstration work and home demonstration work in said county.

Upon examination of the foregoing statute it is evident that it is "permissive" in nature; not mandatory. County commissioners "may" contract for extension work in their respective counties. If they do, an obligation is imposed upon them to provide adequate funds to finance the work. However, it should be noted that nothing is said concerning a specific amount or percentage. This is left solely to the determination of the county commissioners. In the absence of a standard or uniform finance policy applicable to all counties, great variation in the percentage of funds contributed by the county to the county extension budget has resulted between counties. During the 1966-67 fiscal year, Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service records revealed a range of county contribution from a low of 5 percent to a high of 53 percent.

This great disparity prompted the investigator to ask, "why?" In view of the fact that Oklahoma had no ratio, formula or guideline for

counties to follow, was this wide variation due to differences in county valuation? or perhaps other factors? This led to a further question: Could there be some relationship or association between how much county commissioners provide for extension and how much they know about extension and their value judgment of it? This rationale led the writer to formulate the questions set forth in Chapter I, which serve to give direction to the present investigation.

Review of Selected Literature

A number of studies exploring the perception of various clientele groups of the Cooperative Extension Service have been conducted. A review of these studies indicates that "Extension's various publics are not in complete agreement as toward what image the organization should be striving. A close relationship exists between the areas of interest of clientele groups and what they feel the organization should represent" (5, p. 48).

Most of these studies have focused on the concept "perception." However, there is little unanimity to be noticed in definitions of the term. The aforementioned studies have investigated various sub-facets of perception as they dealt with the different groups. For example, Blalock (8) divided perception into (1) knowledge, (2) appraisal, and (3) scope. The present investigation chooses to focus on the concepts "cognition" and "appraisal" as delineated in the title of the study. These concepts are chosen, not because of a greater precision in definition, but because it is believed they more vividly convey the nature of the study.

Blalock (5, p. 48), in a review of perception studies, makes this

summary statement: "Evidence indicates we have assumed people knew far more about Cooperative Extension than they actually do."

The perception studies, with the various groups of the Cooperative Extension Service, have many elements of commonality running through them. To collect the data, similar procedures and interview schedules were used, thereby making it possible to compare some of the results. Several are similar in attempting to elicit from the respondents, their understanding of the organizational relationship which the Extension Service has to other agencies.

A review of Moore's (18) study of program planning committee members in Montana; Rynearson's (23) study of selected agricultural business concerns in Wisconsin; Griffith's (13) study of formula feed operators in Kansas; and Amburgey's (1) study of commercial fertilizer manufacturers and distributors representatives in Arizona reveals great diversity and considerable misinformation among respondents concerning Cooperative Extension's organizational affiliation (5, p. 49).

In 1962 Sterling Kyd (16) reported a study which he conducted among Missouri legislators. His was an investigation into factors involved in legislative decision making rather than an analysis of legislator's perceptions of the Missouri Extension Service. However, he found a rather poor understanding of the entire field of adult education among Missouri legislators. Of 124 legislators interviewed, only seven demonstrated an understanding of Cooperative Extension role in adult education (5, p. 49).

Blalock's (8) study, reported in 1963, was the first to be directly concerned with the perception of state legislators toward Cooperative Extension. His study involved 145 of the 170 members of the 1961

General Assembly of North Carolina. His findings demonstrated a lack of concensus and understanding among legislators of the Cooperative Extension's objectives, organization, financing and programs.

A lack of agreement as to what Cooperative Extension's objectives and functions should be, the type of programs it should offer, and the clientele it should serve is further evident as one surveys the literature (5, p. 50).

There is paucity of research with various groups concerning their perception of the broad objectives to which the Extension Service should address itself. The perception studies previously referred to, plus those by Lawson (17), Biever (4), Dehnert (10), Quinn (22), and Beavers (2) were concerned with specific objectives and functions. These studies indicate a continued emphasis on youth development, technology in agriculture and home economics (5, p. 50).

There is also great variation of opinion among clientele groups concerning priorities of Extension programs. Of the nine program areas contained in the Scope Report (29), perhaps the most controversial one is "public affairs." In the perception studies, feed operators, program planning committee members, home economics project leaders, fertilizer representatives, and agricultural business concerns indicated that this area should receive low priority. However, there was general agreement that extension programs must stem from a broader base than production agriculture (5, pp. 50-51).

The groups studied in Montana, Kansas and Arizona rated the average size farm as having top priority among the clienteles which Extension should serve. Beyond this, there was considerable disparity of opinion concerning other clientele priorities (5, p. 52).

The investigator is aware of only two studies which have focused on county commissioners in relation to Cooperative Extension work. White (34) conducted a study of county commissioners perception of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Northeastern District. She was interested in assessing their attitudes about extension programs, clientele, qualifications of the county extension staff, role of volunteer leaders as well as other facets of its program and organization. She found great diversity of knowledge about and understanding of the Cooperative Extension Service. However, the results of White's study indicate a very favorable appraisal of the Cooperative Extension Service.

Campbell (9) recently did a study of county commissioners attitudes toward area specialized agents in the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service. An attitude questionnaire of fourteen items was submitted to 178 county commissioners, one-half from counties where area agents had been assigned and one-half from counties which had no area agents assigned to them. His findings indicate no significant differences in attitudes between these two groups.

Campbell (9, p. 65) recommended that a more general study be made of county commissioners in Oklahoma to determine their level of understanding of the Cooperative Extension Service.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE

The basic purpose of this investigation was to: (1) ascertain county commissioners' knowledge and appraisal of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, and (2) to determine what relationship exists, if any, between their knowledge and appraisal of the Cooperative Extension Service and selected classification variables.

The purpose of this chapter is to present the methodology for accomplishing the above stated objectives.

Design

The design of this study might best be classified as "survey research" (15). Although survey research is criticized by some writers as not being scientific, it is nevertheless, a method often used in educational research. In giving a definition of it, Kerlinger says, "Survey research is that branch of social and scientific investigation that studies large and small populations by selecting and studying samples chosen from the populations to discover the relative incidence, distribution and interrelations of sociological and psychological variables" (15, p. 393). He further states, "Although the approach and techniques of survey research can be used on any set of objects that can be well-defined, survey research focuses on people, the vital facts of people, and their beliefs, opinions, attitudes, motivations,

and behavior" (15, p. 394).

Describing the various types of surveys, Kerlinger states, "Surveys can be conveniently classified by the following methods of obtaining information: personal interview, mail questionnaire, panel, telephone, and controlled observation. Of these, the personal interview far overshadows the others as perhaps the most powerful and useful tool of social scientific research" (15, p. 395).

In order to collect the data needed for this study, the personal interview technique was used. A structured interview schedule was constructed and used by the investigator in face-to-face interview sessions with each of the 54 individuals included in the study.

Sample and Population

Oklahoma is divided geographically into 77 counties. Three county commissioners are elected by popular vote in each of these counties, making a total of 231 county commissioners. Since the personal interview technique was selected as the means of collecting data, it was considered unfeasible, from the standpoint of time and money, to attempt to survey the entire population. Therefore, 18 counties were randomly selected to the sample. The three county commissioners in each of the 18 counties, totalling 54, were personally interviewed during April and May of 1968. During the proposal stage of the study, it was felt that to interview approximately 54 county commissioners would give a fairly representative and accurate indication of county commissioners' knowledge and appraisal of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service.

The random sampling procedure could have been carried out in

either of two ways: (1) by randomly selecting 54 county commissioners from the total number throughout the state without regard to county designation, or (2) by randomly selecting 18 counties throughout the state and allowing the three county commissioners from each to constitute the sample. The investigator felt that either method could give a representative sample. However, the latter method was deemed more feasible in that the interviewees would be more geographically grouped, thereby requiring less time and expense than if individually scattered over the entire state.

Actually, the sample drawn was a stratified random sample (33). Since one of the major aims of the study was to investigate the relationship between level of financial support and knowledge and appraisal scores of county commissioners, the counties were selected from three contribution ranges. A financial record was obtained from the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, which ranked the state's 77 counties by the percent of county budget contributed by county government during the 1966-67 fiscal year. The percentage contribution ranged from a low of 5.39 percent to a high of 51.53 percent. This rank order of counties was divided into nearly equal thirds and labeled high level group, medium level group and low level group. The number of counties in each group and the percentage range were as follows: high level -- 25 counties with a range from 31.49 to 51.53 percent; medium level -- 26 counties with a range from 21.38 to 32.31 percent; and low level -- 26 counties with a range from 5.39 to 21.06 percent.

Six counties were randomly selected from each of the three levels. At the same time, two additional counties were selected from each level, as alternates, to allow for unexpected situations. As the interview-

ing proceeded, it was necessary to include several commissioners from the alternate counties due to illness of some of the county commissioners and other factors beyond the control of the investigator.

A map showing the counties included in the study may be found in Appendix B.

Preparation of the Instrument

To obtain consistency of response from interviewees, a structured interview schedule was used to collect the data for this study.

The schedule, in its final form, was an adaptation of one prepared and used by Blalock (8) in his study of the state legislators' perception of the North Carolina Extension Service. As previously noted, in Chapter I, he sought to determine, under the concept of preception, the respondents' knowledge and appraisal of the Extension Service. His schedule was divided into nine major sections:

1. Personal data
2. Extension involvement
3. Knowledge and evaluation of Extension's purposes, objectives, and activities
4. Knowledge and evaluation of current Extension programs
5. Knowledge of Extension's clientele
6. Knowledge of Extension's organizational structure and financing
7. Knowledge of Extension's professional staff
8. Appraisal of size, and qualification of Extension's staff
9. Miscellaneous area

Since the purpose of the present study was to obtain information from county commissioners similar to that sought of legislators, it

was felt that Blalock's schedule could be modified to meet the needs of this investigation. Mr. Blalock was contacted relative to the possibility of using the instrument, and he very graciously granted permission to use it in whole or modified form.

After receiving permission to use the interview schedule, several steps were taken to make it applicable for use in assessing county commissioners' cognition and appraisal of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service.

First, those items considered relevant were selected and revised as necessary.

Second, a revised schedule containing items which might be used was prepared.

Third, the revised schedule was given to each of the five District Extension Directors with this typewritten statement: "Attached is the instrument, which I discussed with you, in revised form. I would appreciate your reaction to the items on it. I am primarily concerned with your impressions of the wording of each item in terms of the possible effect it will have on the interviewees and the continued best possible relationship between extension and county commissioners. If you deem an item completely objectionable or question the need for it in terms of possibly impairing the above mentioned relationship, please make a notation to this effect." Several changes and deletions were suggested by the district directors.

Fourth, after receiving the schedules from the district directors, with their suggested changes, a copy was given to Dr. J. C. Evans, Vice-President for Extension at Oklahoma State University, for his consideration. A few days later, the writer had an appointment with

Dr. Evans to receive his reaction and comments.

Fifth, taking into consideration all of the comments and suggestions for change, the schedule was retyped in its second revised form.

Sixth, the schedule was given to and discussed with each member of the writer's graduate committee to gain their final approval.

Following this, the instrument was considered ready for use.

The Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service supervisory and administrative staff, mentioned in steps 3 and 4 above, performed a vital role in the procedure for several reasons: (1) their involvement and counsel was very helpful to the writer in preparing the instrument, (2) although the state Extension staff was aware of and in agreement with the study from the beginning, their involvement, hopefully, facilitated greater understanding about and acceptance of the study, and (3) their expertise in the area of Cooperative Extension work and their knowledge of and association with county commissioners, helped to validate the instrument.

In its final form, the instrument consisted of 73 items or questions. Most of the items were of the forced-response type with a "No opinion" option. Uniform data of a quantitative nature may be obtained through this type response, thereby lending itself to analysis. However, several open-ended questions were included on the schedule. These were designed to elicit information of a qualitative nature from the respondents. This is admitted to be one of the primary advantages which the face-to-face interview has over the mail questionnaire or other types of survey research. The writer is aware of the difficulty of categorizing this kind of data in a meaningful way. However, in the present study, it was thought advisable to include several open-ended

questions for the reasons stated above.

The instrument basically contains items which may be classified under one of the following nine divisions:

1. Personal data
2. Involvement with the Cooperative Extension Service
3. Knowledge and appraisal of Extension's clientele
4. Knowledge and appraisal of Extension's purpose and activities
5. Knowledge and appraisal of Extension's programs
6. Knowledge of Extension's organizational affiliation and financing
7. Knowledge of Extension's professional staff
8. Appraisal of size and qualification of Extension's staff
9. Miscellaneous

During the process of preparing the instrument, several persons expressed concern over the length of the schedule. It was felt by some that it would be extremely difficult to get county commissioners to answer a 73 item questionnaire. Since length was a basic consideration in preparing the instrument, it was designed to require a minimum amount of the respondent's time and yet yield a maximum amount of information in keeping with the purpose of the study. It was felt that each interview could be completed in not more than one hour.

A copy of the interview instrument may be found in Appendix A.

Collection of the Data

The 54 county commissioners from the 18 selected counties were all personally interviewed by the investigator during April and May of 1968. Before interviews were begun, the District Extension Directors mailed a letter to each county director in the selected counties

explaining the nature of the study and that the investigator would soon be in his county interviewing county commissioners. Sufficient copies of the interview schedule were supplied the District Directors to accompany the letter. Splendid cooperation was obtained from every facet of the Extension organization.

A letter (Appendix C) was composed, individually typewritten and mailed to each of the 54 county commissioners included in the study. The letter noted the position of leadership which county commissioners occupy in relation to the conduct of extension work in their respective counties. It informed them of the nature of the study, their inclusion in it and that they soon would be contacted by telephone for an interview appointment.

Prior to beginning the interviews there was slight concern on the part of the investigator as to the reception he might receive from the county commissioners. This concern was primarily prompted by the fact that, during the year previous to the study, the Oklahoma Extension Service had shifted a greater burden of financial responsibility to local government for carrying on Extension work in the counties. The reaction which county commissioners might have to a study of this nature was uncertain. However, the investigator felt competent to cope with nearly any situation with tact and diplomacy. As the interviewing progressed, fears or concerns previously held, were quickly allayed and proven to be ill founded.

Interviews were completed with 50 of the original 54 commissioners selected. Of the other four, one had an extended illness, another was "too busy" for the interview after an appointment had been made, the third was unable to complete the interview session due to a health

condition, and the fourth could not be contacted during three attempts. Two of these men were from counties in the middle level contribution group and two from the low level group. Since alternate counties had been selected in the original sampling, two men from an alternate county in the medium level group, and two men from an alternate county in the low level group were selected and interviewed in place of the four with whom an interview could not be secured or completed.

Since the 18 counties were scattered over the entire state, the investigator grouped the counties into four groups. Depending upon the number of counties in a group, the investigator interviewed in those counties on as many days. The investigator would usually go into a county the evening before it was to be worked, get a motel room and phone the commissioners for appointments for the next day. This procedure conserved time, travel and other expense.

The investigator attempted to interview all three county commissioners in one day while in a given county. However, on certain days it was possible to secure an interview with only one commissioner, while on one particular day the investigator interviewed six commissioners. The investigator always attempted to meet the commissioner at a convenient time and place. This often necessitated driving several miles between appointments to the home, county barn or other location designated by the commissioner.

The investigator was well received by most of the county commissioners. Each interview session would begin with the investigator briefly explaining:

1. The nature of the study
2. The reason for inclusion in the study

3. The fact that the study was a part of the investigator's graduate program at Oklahoma State University
4. That the reason for the investigator's interest in this particular study was due to his past affiliation with the Oklahoma Extension Service
5. That the study was initiated by the investigator and not the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service
6. That their individual responses would be treated confidentially
7. That questions usually had a "No opinion" option, should they choose not to respond to an item
8. The potential value and benefit which might derive from the study

With these remarks, any skepticism or concern on their part was usually alleviated and the interview schedule would be addressed. In each case, the interviewee would be given a copy of the schedule with the suggestion that he would need only to read the questions and respond, and that the investigator would record the responses on his copy. This procedure greatly expedited the interview sessions.

The time required for the interview sessions ranged from 25 minutes to one and one-half hour in length. The average time required was about 40 minutes.

Scoring of Instruments

The expressed purpose of this dissertation was to obtain a measure of county commissioners' (1) cognition, and (2) appraisal of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service. To accomplish this, it was necessary to include items in the interview schedule which would yield a numerical score for each of these facets of the study. For the purpose of discussing the scoring method, the more familiar concept "knowledge" will be used in place of cognition.

Knowledge Score

Thirty items dispersed throughout the interview schedule were pre-determined to yield a total knowledge score. The items were designed to measure the respondents knowledge about extension's purpose, activities, programs, clientele, organizational affiliation, financing, and professional staff.

Since the instrument was patterned after the one used in Blalock's (8) study, his scoring technique was also used.

The knowledge items are designated by a "K" on the instrument found in Appendix A. The numerical value for responses to each item may also be noted in Appendix A. The scoring is self explanatory except for items 21 through 29, 30, 33, 34, and 40 through 50. Scoring these items required a departure from regular scoring procedures.

In order to score items 21 through 29, the District Extension Directors were asked to note, according to their considered importance, each of the activities. Their unit response served as a standard for scoring these items. The respondent could only score negatively to this group of items. For any item, if the interviewee's response was the same as or one place either side of the standard, no points would be deducted. However, if the interviewee's response differed 2 places either side of the standard, one point would be deducted and if it differed 3 or more places either side of the standard, 3 points would be deducted.

For the purpose of scoring item 30, a letter was mailed to county directors in the selected counties, requesting that the county extension staff rank the nine program areas according to the amount of time and effort which the county staff had devoted to each area during the past

two years. When these lists were received, the respondent was given 1 point for each area correctly identified of the top 6 ranked areas.

County directors were also asked to respond to items 33 and 34. The interviewee's responses were checked against the county director's responses for each county. The respondent was given +3 points for each item correctly identified.

The District Extension Directors also provided the standard for scoring items 40 through 50, with the above mentioned procedure likewise being used to score these items.

The possible knowledge score ranged from -67 to +46. The actual knowledge scores of the 54 county commissioners interviewed ranged from -8 to +33.

In those cases where rank orders were desired, such as with items 21 through 29 and items 40 through 50, the number of commissioners responding to each value was multiplied by that value, the products totaled for each item and then the items ranked according to numerical score.

Appraisal Score

The appraisal score was derived from 14 items which were designed to yield an overall measure of the respondents' evaluation of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service. The score was intended to be an indication of the favorable or unfavorable attitude of a county commissioner toward extension work. To accomplish this, the items were selected to measure a commissioners' value judgment of extension's purpose, activities, programs, clientele, financing, and size and qualification of professional staff.

The appraisal items are indicated by an "A" on the instrument found in Appendix A. The numerical value for responses to each item may also be noted in Appendix A.

Involvement Score

As noted in Chapter I, county commissioners previous experience with extension's personnel, programs, and activities was one of the classification variables with which this study was concerned. Therefore, it was necessary to design a series of items from which could be derived a measure of their involvement with Extension during past years. Items 11 through 18 were included for this purpose. A respondent's score for each item was the value assigned to the category of frequency indicated by the interviewee. These values may be noted at the top of each column (See Appendix A). Item scores were totaled to give an overall Involvement Score. While the possible involvement score ranged from 0 to 24, the actual scores ranged from 1 to 17.

Statistical Procedures

The statement of purpose, expressed in Chapter I, posed five questions to be answered by this investigation. Data are presented in Chapter IV to answer questions one, two, and three. This section reports the findings to specific items, taking the entire sample into consideration. The procedure used involved taking frequency counts of the responses to specific items, computing percentages and comparing the percentage of each response in contingency tables described by Wert and others (33, p. 3).

The statistical procedure used in answering questions four and

five involved comparing knowledge and appraisal scores to the three levels of financial support and four of the classification variables by means of the Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance as suggested by Seigel (26, pp. 184-194).

When significant differences were found to exist among groups by use of the Kruskal-Wallis test, comparisons between pairs of groups were then computed by the Mann-Whitney U test as suggested by Seigel for use with two independent samples (26, pp. 116-127). The Mann-Whitney U test was also used to test the relationship between the fifth classification variable, occupation, and knowledge and appraisal scores.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF DATA

The primary purpose of this chapter is to present the information obtained from the county commissioners interviewed for this study. The remainder of the chapter will be divided into two sections.

The first section reports the general characteristics of the county commissioners who were interviewed. Numerical and percentage frequency distributions are reported for the personal data obtained.

In the second section, responses to the interview questions are presented and discussed. To answer the first, second and third questions expressed in the statement of purpose of the study, the data are organized under these three questions respectively. The data are primarily reported in frequency distribution tables. In some cases, rank orders are also calculated and reported.

General Characteristics of County Commissioners

The interview schedule contained several questions designed to elicit personal information from the respondents. They were asked to give information about their tenure, age, place of residence, occupation, education, type of county represented, and involvement with Extension activities.

The number and percent of county commissioners in the various tenure categories is reported in Table I. Nearly one-half of the

county commissioners interviewed had served 5 to 9 years. Slightly over one-fourth had served 4 years or less while almost 15 percent indicated they had served 15 years or more. The smallest category was 10-14 years, with only 11.0 percent indicating this tenure.

TABLE I
NUMBER AND PERCENT OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO TENURE

Years Served	Frequency Distribution	
	Number	Percent
4 Years or Less	14	26.0
5-9 Years	26	48.1
10-14 Years	6	11.0
15 or More	8	14.9
Total Responses	54	100.0

Table II shows the number and percent of the respondents classified according to their place of residence. By far the largest percentage of the commissioners listed rural farm as their place of residence, with 41.0 percent indicating this category. Slightly over 20.0 percent reported their residence in a village under 2,500 population. The next largest category was city, 10,000 and over, with 11.0 percent indicating this as their place of residence. The remaining three categories, rural non-farm; city 2,500-4,999; and city, 5,000-9,999, each had 9.2 percent of the county commissioners who indicated these as their place of residence.

TABLE II
 NUMBER AND PERCENT OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS CLASSIFIED
 ACCORDING TO PLACE OF RESIDENCE

Place of Residence	Frequency Distribution	
	Number	Percent
Rural Farm	22	41.0
Rural Non-Farm	5	9.2
Village, under 2,500	11	20.4
City, 2,500-4,999	5	9.2
City, 5,000-9,999	5	9.2
City, 10,000 and over	6	11.0
Total Responses	54	100.0

The data in Table III show the number and percent of commissioners in the various age categories. One-third of the commissioners interviewed were 40-49 years of age. Another one-third were in the 50 to 59 years of age category. Slightly over one-fourth listed their age as 60 or over. Only 7.4 percent were 30 to 39 years of age. None of the 54 respondents were under 30 years of age.

Information concerning the highest level of education attained by the commissioners participating in the study is reported in Table IV. While the interview schedule was in the preparation stage, some persons indicated a concern that this question might be embarrassing to the interviewees, and therefore, should be deleted. However, since it was a rather standard question included in many similar studies and due to the desire to use it as a classification variable, it was deemed

desirable to include it. Only a very few commissioners registered any hesitancy to give the information during the interviewing and none refused to give it.

TABLE III
NUMBER AND PERCENT OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO AGE

Age	Frequency Distribution	
	Number	Percent
Under 30	0	0
30-39	4	7.4
40-49	18	33.3
50-59	18	33.3
60 or over	14	26.0
Total Responses	54	100.0

The data in Table IV indicate that 48.2 percent of the commissioners had attained the high school level, while 22.2 percent responded they had attained the grade school level. Another 22.2 percent indicated they had had some college work. Only 7.4 percent of the respondents reported that they were college graduates. Of the four commissioners who were college graduates, one had a Ph.D. degree another only lacked completion of the dissertation toward his Ph.D. degree, and a third had served on the Board of Regents for state colleges in Oklahoma.

TABLE IV
 NUMBER AND PERCENT OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS CLASSIFIED
 BY HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINED

Educational Level Attained	Frequency Distribution	
	Number	Percent
Grade School	12	22.2
High School	26	48.2
Some College	12	22.2
College Graduate	4	7.4
Total Responses	54	100.0

Table V contains data pertaining to the main occupation of the respondents, other than serving as a county commissioner. A majority of the commissioners listed farming and ranching as their main occupation, with 63.0 percent so indicating. Almost 15.0 percent listed non-agricultural businessman as their occupation. Of the remaining commissioners, 5.5 percent reported they were in an agriculturally related business, 5.5 percent listed real estate and insurance, 5.5 percent responded that they were in an occupation other than those listed, 3.7 percent were retired and only 1.9 percent indicated a professional occupation.

TABLE V
 NUMBER AND PERCENT OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS CLASSIFIED
 BY MAIN OCCUPATION

Occupation	Frequency Distribution	
	Number	Percent
Farmer or Rancher	34	63.0
Professional	1	1.9
Businessman Non-Agricultural	8	14.9
Businessman Agriculturally Related	3	5.5
Real Estate and Insurance	3	5.5
Retired	2	3.7
Others	3	5.5
Total Responses	54	100.0

Responses to the question concerning the type of county the commissioners felt they represented are reported in Table VI. The data show that one-half of the interviewees considered their county as mostly rural, but some urban. Another 18.5 percent felt that the county they represented was almost completely rural. Slightly over one-fourth indicated that they felt their county was about evenly divided between rural and urban. Only 5.5 percent felt they represented a county which was mostly urban, but some rural. None of the commissioners included in the study felt they represented an almost completely urban county.

TABLE VI
 NUMBER AND PERCENT OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS CLASSIFIED
 BY THE TYPE OF COUNTY THEY FELT THEY REPRESENTED

Type of County Represented	Frequency Distribution	
	Number	Percent
Almost Completely Rural	10	18.5
Mostly Rural, Some Urban	27	50.0
About Evenly Divided	14	26.0
Mostly Urban, Some Rural	3	5.5
Almost Completely Urban	0	0
Total Responses	54	100.0

The investigator felt it desirable to ascertain the degree of involvement of county commissioners in extension programs and activities. Table VII contains information concerning whether county commissioners or their families had participated in extension programs. Since this item allowed the interviewees more than one response, the total number of responses exceed 54 and the percentages, when totaled, exceed 100.

The greatest participation was evident in the 4-H club program, with 61.1 percent of the commissioners indicating involvement in this area. Slightly over 46.0 percent of the commissioners indicated that they had utilized the Extension office for the purpose of receiving agricultural information. About 39.0 percent of the interviewees responded that a member of their family had participated in home demonstration club work. Only 16.6 percent of the commissioners indicated no involvement in any of the extension programs listed.

TABLE VII
 NUMBER AND PERCENT OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS CLASSIFIED
 BY THEIR PARTICIPATION IN EXTENSION
 PROGRAMS

Program Participated In	Frequency Distribution	
	Number N=54	Percent
4-H	33	61.1
Home Demonstration Clubs	21	38.8
Agricultural Information	25	46.3
None	9	16.6

Another question, intended to determine county commissioners involvement with Extension, dealt with their membership on a commodity committee, a community or area development association or any other extension affiliated group. After the interviewing began, the need to clarify what was meant by the word "commodity" quickly became apparent. Due to county commissioners responsibilities in administering county welfare programs and "commodity" food distribution, most of the respondents rather automatically thought of this. It was explained in each interview that this item referred to agricultural commodities such as crops and livestock rather than surplus food stuffs.

The data in Table VIII show responses to this item. A sizeable majority, 88.8 percent, reported they had never held membership on any such committee, association, or group. Of the 11.2 percent who indicated they had been members of such groups, 5.5 percent had served 3 to 4 years, 3.8 percent had served 1 to 2 years, and only 1.9

percent had served 5 years or more.

TABLE VIII
NUMBER AND PERCENT OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS CLASSIFIED BY THEIR
MEMBERSHIP ON A COMMODITY COMMITTEE, COMMUNITY OR
AREA DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION OR OTHER
EXTENSION AFFILIATED GROUP

Response	Number	Percent
No	48	88.8
1-2 years	2	3.8
3-4 years	3	5.5
5 years or more	1	1.9
Total Responses	54	100.0

In an attempt to further ascertain county commissioners involvement with Extension, the interviewees were shown a list of various types of contacts that a person might have with the Cooperative Extension Service and were asked to indicate how frequently they had had each type of contact during the past year. A respondent could indicate one of four possible frequency categories: never, not very often, occasionally, or frequently. The interview schedule provided numerical guidelines for each frequency category for the purpose of giving the commissioners a common reference point. (See Appendix A).

Table IX contains a percentage distribution of the responses to each item. It will be noted also that a rank order of the eight items is calculated and reported. To obtain a ranking among the items, the respondents' total score for each item was derived by multiplying the

TABLE IX

PERCENTAGE AND RANK ORDER DISTRIBUTION OF COUNTY
 COMMISSIONERS ACCORDING TO THEIR INVOLVEMENT
 WITH EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Type of Experience	Never	Not very often	Occasionally	Frequently	Total Percent	Resp Total Score	Rank
	%	%	%	%			
Read news stories written by Extension personnel	3.7	14.9	26.0	55.4	100.0	126	1
Listen to Extension radio programs	11.0	16.8	22.2	50.0	100.0	114	3
Read Extension Newsletter or bulletin	9.2	11.0	26.0	53.8	100.0	121	2
Attend Extension Meetings, tours, demonstrations, etc.	26.0	57.2	14.9	1.9	100.0	50	7
Visit or telephone the Extension office for assistance	37.0	12.9	24.1	26.0	100.0	75	6
Visited by someone from the Extension staff	24.1	20.4	12.9	42.6	100.0	94	4
Had a demonstration or meeting held on farm	<u>No</u> 94.5			<u>Yes</u> 5.5	100.0	9	8
Other	7.4	38.9	31.5	22.2	100.0	91	5

number of responses for each frequency category by the numerical value assigned to that category. The values were as follows: 0-never; 1-not very often; 2-occasionally; and 3-frequently.

"Reading news stories written by extension personnel" ranked first as a source of contact which county commissioners had with the Extension Service. The data reveals that 81.4 percent of the respondents had this type of contact either "occasionally" or "frequently", while 3.7 percent of the commissioners "never" engaged in this activity. The remaining 14.9 percent did so, but "not very often."

The second ranked source of contact which county commissioners had with Extension was "reading extension newsletters and bulletins." Slightly under 80 percent reported that they had engaged in this activity either "occasionally" or "frequently" during the past year, while 11.0 percent indicated the "not very often" category and 9.2 percent the "never" category.

Another source of contact which followed the trend of the two activities discussed above and ranked third, was "listening to extension radio programs." The data in Table IX shows that 50.0 percent of the commissioners participating in the study listened to extension radio programs on a "frequent" basis while 22.2 did so "occasionally," 16.8 percent "not very often" and 11.0 percent "never."

In contrast to the trend noted in the above three types of contact, only 1.9 percent of the commissioners indicated they had "frequently" attended extension meetings, tours, etc. At the other extreme, 26.0 percent indicated they had "never" engaged in this activity during the past year. However, a majority, 57.2 percent, responded they had done so, but "not very often" and 14.9 percent attended "occasionally."

Low involvement in this activity caused it to rank seventh; next to last.

The question, "Have you had a demonstration or meeting held on your farm during the past year?" ranked last among the eight sources of contact. Only 5.5 percent of the commissioners responded "yes" to this question while 94.5 percent responded "no."

Further examination of the data reveals that, "Visited by someone from the extension staff" ranked fourth; "Other (as a county commissioner)" ranked fifth; and "Visit or telephone the Extension office for assistance" ranked sixth.

Responses to Interview Questions

As mentioned at the outset of this chapter, the response to individual interview questions are organized and presented to answer questions one, two, and three expressed in the purpose of the study.

Question 1: What is county commissioners' cognition and appraisal of the purpose, organizational structure, and financing of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service?

Extension's Purpose

Each county commissioner interviewed was asked to respond to the following open-ended question: "As you understand it, what is the Cooperative Extension Service set up to do; what is it's purpose?" The investigator would then record the commissioner's response. After the interviewing was completed, these statements were classified according to the commissioners' understanding of Extension's purpose. Table X shows the number and percent of commissioners who, by some

statement, manifested an understanding of Extension's purpose as suggested by each category.

A commissioner's statement of understanding could often be classified under more than one category. Therefore, the total number of responses in Table X is greater than the number of commissioners in the study and the total percentage exceeds 100.

TABLE X
 FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
 ACCORDING TO THEIR UNDERSTANDING
 OF EXTENSION'S PURPOSE

Extension's Purpose	Frequency Distribution	
	Number	Percent
To provide farmers and homemakers with specific assistance and answers to immediate problems.	24	44.7
To promote, direct and coordinate agriculture, home economic and 4-H programs in the county.	26	48.1
To interpret and bring to farmers and their families the latest research information in farming and homemaking.	21	38.8
To help farmers operate their farms more efficiently thereby increasing personal income.	5	9.2
To enhance community improvement and resource development.	5	9.2
To provide urban residents with specific assistance and answers to immediate problems.	3	5.5
To conduct off-campus educational programs among farm and urban people.	2	3.7

A closer examination of the data reveal that nearly one half of the commissioners interviewed made statements which would indicate that they understood that Extension's purpose is, "To promote, direct and coordinate agriculture, home economics and 4-H programs in the county." As will be noted, this is a broad, all encompassing statement of purpose. Nevertheless, in a general sense, it does reveal a rather accurate understanding of the original intent of the Smith-Lever legislation which established Cooperative Extension work.

As was expected by the interviewer, many of the commissioners had an understanding of Extension's purpose which was oriented toward problem-solving. About 45.0 percent felt that the purpose of the organization is "To provide farmers and homemakers with specific assistance and answers to immediate problems." A smaller percentage saw the dissemination of research information as a major purpose of the Extension Service. About 39.0 percent viewed this as an extension function.

From this point, the number of commissioners whose response could be classified under the other stated purposes dropped off drastically. Only 9.2 percent suggested Extension's purpose as being, "To enhance community improvement and resource development."

The data indicate that only a small percentage saw any connection between Extension's purpose and urban people and their problems. This indicates that many county commissioners still view the Extension Service primarily as an organization set up to help farm people.

Considering the sample as a whole, the data seem to indicate that county commissioners are less knowledgeable about Extension's purpose than would be hoped. Their responses ranged from very comprehensive, accurate and well articulated statements to the response, "I don't

know." This general lack of understanding seems to suggest the need for Extension to direct more effort toward clarifying it's purpose for county commissioners, as well as other clientele groups. This is especially true since the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service has recently assumed added responsibilities toward the conduct of University Extension activities.

Organizational Structure

The Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service is a partnership arrangement between county government, Oklahoma State University, and the United States Department of Agriculture. The county commissioners participating in the study were shown a list of nine agencies or organizations and were asked to indicate which of these agencies with which they understood the Extension Service to be officially connected. The investigator attempted to assure that the question would be understood alike by each interviewee by emphasizing the word "official" in the question. Further explanation would be offered that the Extension Service has a "working relationship" with many different agencies and groups, however, "officially connected" meant that an agency would have some financial or legal control over personnel and programs.

Data pertaining to the responses to this question may be found in Table XI. Since this item provided for multiple selections, the total responses exceed the number of commissioners interviewed and the percentage, when totalled, is greater than 100.

The data in Table XI show that about four out of five commissioners were knowledgeable about Extension's relationship to county government. This rather high percentage is to be somewhat expected

since county commissioners are the official representatives of county government and are primarily responsible for funding extension work at the county level. However, viewing this reciprocally, one out of five commissioners indicated no knowledge of the official connection between county government and extension work, which is rather surprising.

TABLE XI
 FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
 ACCORDING TO THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF ORGANIZATIONS
 WITH WHICH EXTENSION IS OFFICIALLY
 CONNECTED

Organizations with which Extension is officially connected	Frequency Distribution	
	Number	Percent
County government	43	79.6
Oklahoma State University	38	70.3
U.S. Department of Agriculture	37	68.5
Oklahoma Department of Agriculture	31	57.4
Farmers Home Administration	20	37.0
Soil Conservation Service	19	35.2
ASC	13	24.0
Oklahoma Department of Education	9	16.6
None of the above. It is a separate state agency.	0	0
Don't know	3	5.5

Although 70.3 percent of the commissioners knew that Oklahoma State University was officially connected with Extension and 68.5 percent knew that the United States Department of Agriculture was also

officially connected, it is evident that 29.7 percent and 31.5 percent, respectively, were not knowledgeable about this official relationship.

In spite of the explanation given each time the question was asked, as mentioned above, a sizeable percentage of the commissioners felt that the Extension Service was officially connected with the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, the Farmers Home Administration, the Soil Conservation Service, and the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service. The Oklahoma Department of Education was mentioned by 16.6 percent of the respondents. In so doing, they would usually comment about Extension's work in the schools with boys and girls enrolled in 4-H club work. None of the respondents indicated that it was a separate state agency and 5.5 percent professed no knowledge about the matter.

Examination of the data reveal that the three correct responses, based on Extension's "official" relationship to other organizations, were the top three ranking responses according to the total number of commissioners who selected them. However, it is apparent that many county commissioners have a rather vague understanding of Cooperative Extension's organizational structure.

Financing

Due to the fact that county commissioners are legally the local funding body for the conduct of Cooperative Extension work in the counties of Oklahoma, it was deemed advisable to assess their attitudes toward certain financial matters relating to extension work.

Financial figures were obtained from the state extension office concerning the source of funds for the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension

Service. Percentages were calculated and presented in each interview session as follows: "In Oklahoma at the present time, the source of Extension's funds is divided in the following way: Federal-44%; State -37%; County 19%." It would be explained that the 19 percent from the county source was an average for the state as a whole. The commissioners were then asked, "How do you feel about this ratio of support?" The possible response was a dichotomy in terms of "satisfied" or "not satisfied." Responses to this question are reported in Table XII.

TABLE XII
 FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ACCORDING
 TO THEIR SATISFACTION WITH PRESENT RATIO OF FINANCIAL
 SUPPORT FOR EXTENSION WORK

Response	Frequency Distribution	
	Number	Percent
Satisfied	47	87.1
Not Satisfied	7	12.9
Total	54	100.0

Although several commissioners seemed hesitant to respond to this question, 87.1 percent did indicate they were "satisfied" with the present ratio. Only 12.9 percent indicated they were "not satisfied" with the present ratio of support.

In view of the fact that during the past year the state extension office had operationalized a new formula which, in effect, shifted more of the financial burden for the conduct of extension work to local government, the investigator was expecting to find a higher percentage

of commissioners dissatisfied with the financial arrangement. Some of the commissioners may actually have been "not satisfied," and yet responded "satisfied," thinking that to respond otherwise would be an indication of their desire to disturb the status quo, which could conceivably create a greater financial imposition on county government.

In each interview, the commissioner was told that should he respond "not satisfied" he would have an opportunity in the next three items to indicate what changes he would like to see made.

The data concerning changes suggested by the seven commissioners who responded "not satisfied," are reported in Table XIII. Multiple selections were possible which makes the number of responses greater than 7 and the percentage total greater than 100.

The change most often mentioned was for the "county to pay less." Five out of 7 suggested this change while 3 out of 7 felt that the federal share should be more and 2 out of 7 indicated that the state should pay more. However, only 1 out of 7 mentioned that the county contribution should be increased. One commissioner felt that the federal share should be less and 1 commissioner suggested that Extension should equalize the contribution among the counties over the state.

Due to the ever increasing competition for tax dollars at all levels of government, the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service has been recently exploring other potential sources of funds with which to carry on a dynamic extension education program throughout the state. Consequently, one of the potential sources being viewed is the consumer; the individual who receives the benefit of the service or program offered. As an example, Oklahoma for a number of years has had a minimal charge for soil testing. It has been reasoned that perhaps

the consumer ought to pay for more of the services which are of direct benefit to him. Two possibilities where Extension might charge would be in the areas of publications and in-depth shortcourses.

TABLE XIII
 FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS NOT
 SATISFIED WITH RATIO OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT
 ACCORDING TO CHANGES THEY WOULD
 LIKE TO SEE MADE

Change Suggested	Frequency Distribution	
	Number (N=7)	Percent
County to pay more	1	14.3
County to pay less	5	71.4
State to pay more	2	28.6
State to pay less	0	0
Federal to pay more	3	42.9
Federal to pay less	1	14.3
Equalize the contribution among counties	1	14.3

The county commissioners interviewed in this study were asked whether, in the future, they felt Extension should consider the possibility of making charges for some of its services. Opinion was about evenly divided as may be noted by observing the responses in Table XIV. Almost 54 percent felt that Extension should not charge while 42.6 percent either responded with an outright "yes" or a "no opinion" about the matter.

Several of the commissioners that answered "no" felt that exten-

sion services should remain wholly tax supported in order that those of less means could take advantage of them equally as well as the more affluent.

TABLE XIV
 FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
 ACCORDING TO THEIR VIEWS OF WHETHER
 EXTENSION SHOULD CHARGE

Should Extension Charge?	Frequency Distribution	
	Number	Percent
No	29	53.7
Yes	12	22.2
In some instances	11	20.4
No opinion	2	3.7
Total	54	100.0

Question 2: What is the cognition of county commissioners regarding the amount of time and effort that Extension should devote to various clientele groups and the relative importance of certain county director activities?

County Director Activities

Participants in the study were asked to rate a series of county director activities according to how important they perceived each activity to be in order to carry on a good extension program in their respective counties. They could respond to each activity by indicating one of five degrees of importance or "no opinion." Table XV contains

a listing of the nine activities, a percentage distribution of the responses and a rank order among the items. The rank order was derived as follows: a total score for each activity was calculated by first multiplying the number of responses per category by the numerical value for each category. The value assigned each category was as follows: 5-most important; 4-very important; 3-important; 2-not very important; 1-unimportant, and 0-no opinion.

"Organizing and coordinating clubs and associations" ranked first among the activities with 92.6 percent of the commissioners interviewed rating this either "most important" or "very important." It will be noted that 3.7 percent rated it "important" and none rated it in the two bottom categories.

The county director activity which county commissioners considered should have second highest priority was "advising and consulting with farm groups in the county." Closely allied to this, and ranked third, was the activity, "providing information directly to farmers."

These top ratings tended to be congruent with the ratings of these activities by state extension administrative personnel. However, the activity which commissioners considered of lowest priority was "training local leaders." Slightly less than one half of the commissioners viewed this as "very important" or "most important." This is an extreme contrast to the rating placed on this activity by the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service administration, who ranked it as one of the two "most important" activities in which the County Extension Director should engage.

"Representing and coordinating college and USDA programs," which ranked eighth, was viewed as having rather low priority. "Program

TABLE XV

PERCENTAGE AND RANK ORDER DISTRIBUTION OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ACCORDING TO THEIR VIEWS
CONCERNING THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF CERTAIN COUNTY EXTENSION DIRECTOR ACTIVITIES

Type of Activity	Degree of Importance					Unimpt. %	No. Opin. %	Total %	Total Activity Score	Rank Order
	Most Impt. %	Very Impt. %	Impt. %	Not very Impt. %						
Providing Information directly to farmers	20.3	62.9	14.9	0	0	1.9	100.0	215	3	
Public Relations Activities with Local Groups and Officials	22.2	37.0	38.9	0	0	1.9	100.0	203	7	
Advising and Consulting with Farm Groups in the County	31.4	57.4	9.3	0	0	1.9	100.0	224	2	
Training Local Leaders	16.7	31.4	35.1	14.9	0	1.9	100.0	186	9	
Participating in Community Affairs and Activities	24.1	51.8	18.5	3.7	0	1.9	100.0	211	4	
Representing and Coordinating College and USDA programs	26.0	40.7	22.2	3.7	1.9	5.5	100.0	199	8	
Organizing and Coordinating Clubs and Associations	38.9	53.7	5.5	0	0	1.9	100.0	230	1	
Program Planning	20.3	48.1	27.8	0	1.9	1.9	100.0	205	6	
Acting as Secretary of fairs, shows, etc.	33.3	33.3	26.0	5.5	0	1.9	100.0	210	5	

planning" and "public relation activities," ranked sixth and seventh, respectively.

TABLE XVI
RELATIVE RANK OF COUNTY EXTENSION AGENTS'
ACTIVITIES AMONG SELECTED STATES

Extension Activities	Rank order by State				
	Montana	Kansas	California	N.Carolina	Oklahoma
Providing information directly to farmers	1	1	1	1	3
Training local leaders	3	2	4	5	9
Representing and coordi- nating College and USDA programs	4	3	2	7	8
Advising and consulting with farm groups	5	5	3	2	2
Public relations activi- ties	6	6	5	6	7
Program planning	2	4	*	4	6
Participating in com- munity affairs and act- ivities	*	*	*	8	4
Organizing and coordi- nating clubs and as- sociations	*	*	*	3	1
Acting as Secretary of fairs, shows, etc.	*	*	*	9	5

* Not included in study

It is interesting to note that "acting as secretary of fairs, shows, etc." was considered by the county commissioners interviewed to occupy a rather important place among the listed activities.

Two-thirds of the commissioners felt that this was either "very important" or "most important" as an activity of the County Extension Director. The rank of fifth for this activity is a much higher priority than the Oklahoma Extension Service administration has been giving to it during recent years.

For purposes of comparison, Table XVI contains information concerning the relative rank of county extension agents' activities among various clientele group studies in selected states.

Clientele Groups

County commissioners interviewed were requested to indicate their opinion of how much time and effort Extension should spend with various clientele groups. Hence, they were asked to rank each of eleven groups on a scale from 1 to 5. The numbers of the scale represented "amount of time and effort" categories. They were: 5-most; 4-great deal; 3-some; 2-not much; 1-not at all; and 0-no opinion.

County commissioner responses to the different clientele groups are shown in Table XVII. "Small subsistence farms" was rated first among the groups with 44.3 percent of the commissioners indicating they felt Extension agents should devote either "most" or a "great deal" of their time and effort to this group. Over one-half of the commissioners felt "some" time should be devoted to this group.

Following closely in second place was "average size family farms." While only 1.8 percent of the commissioners felt the organization should spend "most" of its time with this group, 96.4 percent of them indicated they felt either "some" or a "great deal" of time and effort should be directed toward this group.

TABLE XVII

PERCENTAGE AND RANK ORDER DISTRIBUTION OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ACCORDING TO THEIR VIEWS OF
THE RELATIVE AMOUNT OF TIME EXTENSION SHOULD DEVOTE TO VARIOUS CLIENTELE GROUPS

Clientele Group	Amount of time and effort						Total Percent	Total Group Score	Rank
	Most	Great Deal	Some	Not much	Not at all	No Opin.			
<u>Farm</u>									
Large Commercial Farms	0	12.9	61.1	22.2	1.9	1.9	100.0	152	4
Average size family farms	1.8	42.6	53.8	0	0	1.8	100.0	184	2
Small subsistence farms	11.0	33.3	51.9	1.9	0	1.9	100.0	188	1
Part-time operators	3.7	5.5	46.4	35.2	5.5	3.7	100.0	138	6
Farm Organizations, farm commodity groups, etc.	7.4	16.7	40.8	29.5	3.7	1.9	100.0	161	3
<u>Non Farm</u>									
Businesses supplying farmers	1.9	9.2	46.4	33.3	5.5	3.7	100.0	139	5
Agriculture marketing firms	3.7	12.8	33.3	44.6	1.9	3.7	100.0	134	7
Businesses serving all consumers	1.9	0	20.4	35.2	38.3	3.7	100.0	97	11
Rural non farm families	1.8	1.8	24.1	46.4	22.2	3.7	100.0	110	9
Town and village families	1.8	7.4	35.2	35.2	14.9	5.5	100.0	124	8
Urban and city families	1.9	3.7	24.1	35.2	24.1	11.0	100.0	103	10

TABLE XVIII

A RANK ORDER COMPARISON AMONG STATES OF THE AMOUNT
OF TIME AND EFFORT THAT SHOULD BE DEVOTED
TO DIFFERENT CLIENTELE GROUPS

Clientele Groups	Rank order by States				
	Montana	Kansas	Arizona	N.Carolina	Oklahoma
<u>Farm</u>					
Average size family farms	1	1	1	1	2
Small subsistence farms	3	2	3	2	1
Large Commercial farms	7	5	5	3.5	4
Farm organizations	4	3	2	5	3
Part time farms	2	6	6	6	6
<u>Non-Farm</u>					
Agriculture marketing firms	*	*	*	3.5	7
Businesses supplying farmers	5	4	4	7	5
Town and village families	6	8	7	8	8
Rural non-farm families	8	7	9	9	9
Businesses serving all consumers	10	9	8	10	11
Urban and city families	9	10	10	11	10
* Not included in study					

"Farm organizations and farm commodity groups" was rated third followed by "large commercial farms" in the fourth ranked position. It may be noted that none of the commissioners felt that Extension

agents should devote "most" of their time to large commercial farms and 22.2 percent of them indicated "not much." However, 74.0 percent of them felt that the organization does have either "some" or a "great deal" of responsibility to this group.

The data show that commissioners continue to view the organization in its traditional role of primarily serving farm groups rather than non-farm groups. They conceive of Extension as having "some" but "not much" responsibility toward agri-business firms, as is evident by the fifth and seventh ranked groups. However, of low priority were "town and village families," "rural non-farm families," and "urban and city families" ranked eighth, ninth, and tenth, respectively. The majority of commissioners considered Extension as having little or no responsibility to "businesses serving all consumers."

Extension research studies have been conducted in various states with various audiences. A comparison of the findings concerning the perceived relative importance of selected Extension clientele groups is interesting. Table XVIII presents this comparative rank order information.

Question 3: What is the cognition and appraisal of county commissioners concerning the programs and professional staff of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service?

Programs

The Scope Report (29) of 1958 listed nine broad areas of program responsibility for the Cooperative Extension Service. To determine county commissioners' knowledge and appraisal of Extension programs in their respective counties, each commissioner interviewed was

shown a list of these nine areas and was asked to indicate his awareness of the areas in which Extension conducted a program in his county. Responses to this question are reported in Table XIX. Since multiple responses were possible, the total number of responses exceeds 54 and the percentage total exceeds 100.

TABLE XIX
FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION AND RANK ORDER OF RESPONDENTS
KNOWLEDGE OF PROGRAMS BEING CONDUCTED IN
THE COUNTY

Program Area	Frequency Distribution		
	Number	Percent	Rank
Agricultural Production	47	87.0	2
Marketing Distribution and Utilization of Agricultural Products	28	51.8	9
Conservation, Development and Use of Natural Resources	44	81.4	4
Management on the Farm and in the Home	45	83.3	3
Family Living	30	55.5	8
Youth Development	50	92.6	1
Leadership Development	37	68.5	5
Community Improvement and Resource Development	36	66.6	6
Public Affairs	33	61.1	7

County commissioners were most aware of the "youth development" program. Over 92.0 percent indicated knowledge of work in this area. Almost without exception, they would mention the work which Extension does with boys and girls through the 4-H club program.

The second most often mentioned area was "agricultural production." Eighty-seven percent of the commissioners were aware of Extension's effort in this area.

"Management on the farm and in the home" and "conservation, development and use of natural resources" ranked third and fourth, respectively, with over four-fifths of the commissioners indicating knowledge of work in these areas. Over 68 percent had knowledge of Extension's efforts in "leadership development" while two-thirds were aware of work in "community improvement and resource development."

"Public affairs" was rated seventh and "family living" was rated eighth. Commissioners were least aware of work being done in the area of "marketing" with only 51.8 percent so indicating.

Commissioners were also asked whether, in their opinion, any of the nine areas were either being over-emphasized or under-emphasized. Table XX reports their evaluation relative to these two questions. Generally speaking, commissioners were highly satisfied with the amount of emphasis which the Extension Service has been placing on each of the nine program areas. It will be noted that only three commissioners felt any programs were being over-emphasized: one commissioner, youth development and two commissioners, public relations.

Anywhere from 2 to 6 commissioners felt that each of the nine areas was not receiving enough emphasis. Six commissioners indicated concern that youth development and management on the farm and in the home were being under-emphasized.

Of interest to the investigator was which three of the nine program areas county commissioners considered most important to the welfare of the people of their counties and which three they considered

least important.

TABLE XX
 FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
 ACCORDING TO THEIR VIEWS CONCERNING SELECTED
 PROGRAM AREAS

Program Area	Number who feel Area is:	
	Over Emphasized	Under Emphasized
Agricultural Production	0	4
Marketing	0	2
Conservation	0	4
Management on Farm	0	6
Family Living	1	2
Youth Development	0	6
Leadership Development	0	3
Community Improvement	0	5
Public Relations	2	3

Therefore, two questions were included to elicit this information. A summary of their responses may be noted in Table XXI.

"Agricultural production" was mentioned as one of the three most important areas by 40 of the 54 commissioners while only 4 commissioners mentioned "family living" as one of three most important areas. "Public affairs" was mentioned as one of three least important areas by 33 commissioners while "youth development" was mentioned only twice as one of three least important areas.

TABLE XXI
FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION SUMMARY OF THE RELATIVE
IMPORTANCE OF SELECTED EXTENSION PROGRAM
AREAS AS VIEWED BY COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS

Program Area	Number of Times Mentioned as 1 o 3:	
	Most Important	Least Important
Agricultural Production	40	5
Marketing	12	13
Conservation	20	12
Management on the Farm	15	13
Family Living	4	22
Youth Development	33	2
Leadership Development	20	11
Community Improvement	10	11
Public Affairs	6	33

Table XXII presents a comparison of the importance county commissioners placed on each of the nine program areas in relation to the amount of time and effort county staffs reported spending on each area. A rank order was obtained by multiplying the number of "most important" responses for each area by +3, and the number of "least important" responses for each area by -3, and subtracting, to derive a numerical score for each area. The same process was used to obtain the rank order of time devoted to the areas by county staffs.

Agricultural production was rated of first importance by county commissioners and also by county staffs in terms of actual time and

effort spent in the area. Youth development was rated second in importance by both groups. Agreement was rather high throughout, except in leadership development and family living. Commissioners viewed leadership development as having third highest priority. However, county staffs ranked family living third while commissioners granted it only eighth place.

TABLE XXII
RANK ORDER COMPARISONS OF PROGRAM AREAS
BY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AND COUNTY
EXTENSION STAFF

Program Area	Rank Order	
	County Commissioners view of Relative Im- portance	Time devoted to area by County Staff
Agricultural Production	1	1
Youth Development	2	2
Leadership Development	3	6
Conservation	4	4.5
Management on the Farm	5	4.5
Marketing	6.5	7
Community Development	6.5	8
Family Living	8	3
Public Affairs	9	9

County staffs ranked agricultural production, youth development and family living first, second and third, respectively, which obviously concurs with the three major program categories in each county--

agriculture, 4-H, and home economics.

Both groups considered public affairs least important of the nine program areas listed.

TABLE XXIII
 FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
 ACCORDING TO THEIR ABILITY TO IDENTIFY TOP
 THREE AND BOTTOM THREE PROGRAM AREAS AS
 LISTED BY COUNTY STAFF

Number of Areas Correctly Identified	Frequency Distribution	
	Number	Percent
Of Top 3:		
0 of 3	6	11.0
1 of 3	27	50.0
2 of 3	20	37.1
3 of 3	1	1.9
Total	54	100.0
Of Bottom 3:		
0 of 3	14	26.0
1 of 3	26	48.1
2 of 3	12	22.2
3 of 3	2	3.7
Total	54	100.0

Table XXIII presents a frequency distribution of county commissioners according to their ability to correctly identify the top three and bottom three program areas as reported by the county staff. The data indicate that, in each case, about 50 percent of the commissioners

could correctly identify only 1 out of 3 areas while only 3.7 percent or less could correctly identify 3 out of 3 areas. Of the bottom 3 program areas, 26.0 percent could not identify any of the correct areas. Commissioners were more hesitant to indicate three areas to which Extension in their county should devote less attention than to indicate the three most important areas. Hence, this may partially explain the lower percentages of correctly identified areas in the bottom group.

In an attempt to determine county commissioners attitudes toward two program areas, they were asked to indicate their feeling about the amount of emphasis which Extension has placed on "agricultural production" and "marketing." Responses concerning agricultural production are shown in Table XXIV. Over 42.0 percent felt that Extension has placed

TABLE XXIV
FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
CLASSIFIED BY THEIR VIEWS OF THE AMOUNT OF
EMPHASIS EXTENSION HAS PLACED ON
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

Relative Amount of Emphasis on Agricultural Production	Frequency Distribution	
	Number	Percent
Has placed too much	0	0
Has placed a little too much	1	1.9
Has placed the right, amount	23	42.6
Needs to place a little more	19	35.2
Needs to place much more	7	12.9
No opinion	4	7.4

"the right amount" of emphasis on agricultural production while 35.2

percent felt "a little more" and 12.9 percent felt "much more" emphasis needs to be directed toward this area. None of the commissioners felt that Extension has placed "too much" emphasis on it, while only 1.9 percent felt that "a little too much" emphasis has been given to it. "No opinion" was expressed by 7.4 percent of the commissioners.

TABLE XXV
 FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
 CLASSIFIED BY THEIR VIEWS OF THE AMOUNT
 OF EMPHASIS EXTENSION HAS PLACED
 ON MARKETING

Relative Amount of Emphasis on Marketing	Frequency Distribution	
	Number	Percent
Has placed too much	0	0
Has placed a little too much	1	1.9
Has placed the right amount	12	22.2
Needs to place a little more	21	38.9
Needs to place much more	13	24.1
No opinion	7	12.9
Total	54	100.0

Table XXV presents commissioners' responses pertaining to Extension's emphasis on marketing. The data indicate less satisfaction on the part of county commissioners with extension work in marketing than in agricultural production. Slightly less than one-fourth indicated they were satisfied with Extension's emphasis on marketing, while 63.0 percent expressed concern that Extension needs to place either "a little more" or "much more" emphasis on it. Only 1.9 percent felt that

"a little too much" effort has been directed toward marketing and none of them indicated "too much." Nearly 13.0 percent expressed "no opinion" about the matter; often explaining that they were unaware of Extension's efforts in this area.

Knowledge of Professional Staff

Information concerning county commissioners acquaintance with certain extension personnel is presented in Table XXVI. As might be expected, commissioners are much better acquainted with county personnel with whom they often have face-to-face contact than they are with state extension personnel whom they seldom see. Over one-half of the commissioners indicated they knew the County Director "very well" and another 38.8 percent felt that they were "fairly well" acquainted with him. It is interesting to note, however, that one commissioner indicated he knew the County Director "not at all," in spite of the fact that both had been serving in their respective positions for several years.

The commissioners responses indicate they are less well acquainted with the Extension Home Economist than they are with the County Director. This should not be surprising, however, since the County Director normally has more direct contact with them over budget and other matters than does the Home Economist. While only 29.6 percent of them felt they were "very well" acquainted with the Home Economist, 42.6 percent felt they knew her "fairly well." Slightly over one-fourth acknowledged that they either knew her "not very well" or "not at all."

TABLE XXVI
 FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
 ACCORDING TO THEIR ACQUAINTANCE WITH
 CERTAIN EXTENSION PERSONNEL

Extension Staff Member	Degree of Acquaintance				Total Percent
	Not at all	Not very well	Fairly well	Very well	
County Director	1.9	5.5	38.8	53.8	100.0
Home Economist	3.7	24.1	42.6	29.6	100.0
Vice-President for Extension at OSU	59.3	35.2	5.5	0	100.0
District Extension Director	55.3	41.0	3.7	0	100.0

Commissioners were asked how well they knew Dr. J.C. Evans, Vice-President for Extension at Oklahoma State University. Almost 60.0 percent indicated they were "not at all" acquainted with him. About 41.0 percent said they knew him either "not very well" or "fairly well." Almost without exception, those who professed acquaintance with him mentioned that they had met him and heard him speak at their state association meeting, but none felt they knew him "very well."

Acquaintance with their District Extension Director from Oklahoma State University was, likewise, rather low. None of the commissioners were "very well" acquainted with the District Director and only 3.7 percent professed they knew him "fairly well." Over 53.0 percent of them acknowledged they were "not at all" acquainted with him, while 41.0 percent indicated they knew him, but "not very well."

The data in Table XXVII contains information about commissioners knowledge of the size of the county extension staff. Seventy-four

percent of the commissioners were knowledgeable about the exact size of the county extension professional staff. Only 3.7 percent of them over-estimated the staff size and only 5.5 percent of them underestimated its size. However, 16.3 percent of the commissioners acknowledged they "didn't know" its size.

TABLE XXVII

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
ACCORDING TO THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF THE SIZE
OF THE COUNTY EXTENSION STAFF

Knowledge of Staff Size	Frequency Distribution	
	Number	Percent
Correct	40	74.0
Over Estimated	2	3.7
Under Estimated	3	5.5
Didn't know	9	16.8
Total	54	100.0

Appraisal of the Qualification and Size
of Extension's Professional Staff

Two questions were asked relating to the qualification and size of Extension's professional staff. One question was designed to elicit their appraisal of the general qualification of the county extension staff. The other question was intended to elicit their evaluation of how well the county extension staff is keeping up-to-date on rapid changes in agriculture and home economics.

Table XXVIII presents the commissioners responses to these two questions. The data seem to indicate that the county extension staff

is held in high esteem by most county commissioners. Nearly 89.0 percent of the commissioners felt that the county staff is "very well" qualified for the job they are doing. Another 7.4 percent evaluated the staff as "fairly well" qualified. Neither "not too well" nor "not at all" was mentioned by any of the respondents.

TABLE XXVIII

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
ACCORDING TO THEIR VIEWS OF QUALIFICATION
OF EXTENSION STAFF

Area of Qualification	Degree of Qualification					Total Percent
	Very Well	Fairly Well	Not too Well	Not at All	No Opin	
	%	%	%	%	%	
General qualifications for the job	88.9	7.4	0	0	3.7	100.0
Keeping up-to-date on changes	75.9	16.7	0	0	7.4	100.0

Table XXIX presents a comparison of the opinions of various clientele groups in different states relative to the qualification of the county extension staff.

In response to the second question, slightly over three-fourths of the commissioners expressed the opinion that the county staff was keeping up-to-date "very well." Nearly 17.0 percent thought they were doing so "fairly well." A minimal number of commissioners expressed "no opinion."

TABLE XXIX

COMPARISON OF APPRAISALS OF SELECTED CLIENTELE
GROUPS RELATIVE TO QUALIFICATIONS
OF COUNTY EXTENSION STAFF

Degree Qualified	Percentage Responding by States			
	Montana	Kansas	California	Oklahoma
Very well	60	66	80	89
Fairly well	35	32	12	7
Not very well	3	0	1	0
Not at all	0	0	0	0
No Opinion	2	2	7	4

Table XXX contains comparative data concerning the evaluation of selected clientele groups in various states relative to how well county extension personnel keep up-to-date.

TABLE XXX

COMPARISON OF EVALUATIONS OF SELECTED GROUPS
RELATIVE TO HOW WELL COUNTY EXTENSION
PERSONNEL KEEP UP-TO-DATE

Extent to which staff keeps up-to-date	Percentage responding by States				
	Montana	Kansas	California	Arizona	Oklahoma
Very well	59	37	83	21	76
Fairly well	34	52	8	50	17
Not too well	3	6	2	24	0
Not at all	0	0	0	0	0
No opinion	4	5	7	5	7

Responses to a question concerning commissioners' appraisal of the County Director's ability to help the average farmer are reported in Table XXXI. Slightly over 61.0 percent of the commissioners indicated they felt the County Director could "nearly always" help the average farmer with his problems while 33.3 percent responded "usually." Only 1.9 percent felt that the County Director could "seldom" help with none of the commissioners responding "never." "No opinion" was indicated by 3.7 percent of the interviewees.

TABLE XXXI
 FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ACCORDING TO
 THEIR VIEWS OF COUNTY DIRECTOR'S ABILITY
 TO HELP AVERAGE FARMER WITH PROBLEMS

How often County Agent can help	Frequency Distribution	
	Number	Percent
Nearly always	33	61.1
Usually	18	33.3
Seldom	1	1.9
Never	0	0
No Opinion	2	3.7
Total	54	100.0

Commissioners were asked two questions pertaining to the size of the county extension staff. First, they were asked their views concerning the adequacy of the present staff. Their responses to this item are contained in Table XXXII. Seventy-four percent of the commissioners in the study were satisfied with its present size. The feeling was often expressed that the work load in the county and the

number of personnel were properly balanced. While only one commissioner felt that the present staff was a "little too large," about one out of every five expressed the feeling that it was a "little too small." A sequential remark which often followed was: "However, we have all we can afford. If the county were required to pay more, we couldn't do it." Only 1.9 percent felt that the county staff size was "much too small" with one commissioner expressing "no opinion."

TABLE XXXII
 FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
 ACCORDING TO THEIR VIEWS CONCERNING ADEQUACY
 OF PRESENT EXTENSION STAFF

Views of Present Staff Size	Frequency Distribution	
	Number	Percent
Much too large	0	0
Little too large	1	1.9
About the right size	40	74.0
Little too small	11	20.3
Much too small	1	1.9
No opinion	1	1.9
Total	54	100.0

A similar question was asked concerning commissioners views of changes which might be needed in county extension staff size contingent upon their estimate of the future needs and demands for the services of the Cooperative Extension Service in their respective counties. The

data in Table XXXVIII show the commissioners' responses to this question. A slight majority of the commissioners felt that future needs and demands would not be sufficient to justify any increase in staff size, therefore, that it "should remain about the same." However, a sizeable number, 42.6 percent, felt that the size of the county staff "should be increased slightly." Only one commissioner indicated concern that it "should be increased a great deal." "No opinion" was indicated by one commissioner.

TABLE XXXVIII
 FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
 ACCORDING TO THEIR VIEWS CONCERNING
 FUTURE CHANGES NEEDED IN SIZE
 OF EXTENSION
 STAFF

Views of Future Changes in Staff Size	Frequency Distribution	
	Number	Percent
Should be decreased a great deal	0	0
Should be decreased slightly	1	1.9
Should remain about the same	28	51.9
Should be increased slightly	23	42.6
Should be increased a great deal	1	1.9
No opinion	1	1.9
Total	54	100.0

Miscellaneous Areas

This section reports findings to several items involved in the interview schedule which do not fit naturally under one of the three

general questions expressed in the statement of purpose in Chapter I.

Importance of Agriculture

Since the Cooperative Extension Service has historically and traditionally served agriculture, it was deemed worthwhile to determine county commissioners general attitude toward agriculture. Commissioners were asked to indicate how important they considered agriculture to be in their respective counties, in relation to other sources of income. Responses to this question are reported in Table XXIV. Approximately one-half of the commissioners voiced the feeling that agriculture was "extremely important" in relation to the overall economy of their counties. The remainder felt that it was either "very important," as indicated by 38.8 percent, or "important," as indicated by

TABLE XXXIV
NUMBER AND PERCENT OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS CLASSIFIED
BY THE PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE OF AGRICULTURE
IN THEIR COUNTY

Degree of Importance	Frequency Distribution	
	Number	Percent
Of Practically no Importance	0	0
Of Little Importance	0	0
Not Very Important	0	0
Important	8	14.9
Very Important	21	38.8
Extremely Important	25	46.3
Total Responses	54	100.0

almost 15.0 percent.

Although many of the commissioners may have been over-estimating the contribution of agriculture to their county's economy, it is nevertheless evident that commissioners in general have an extremely favorable attitude toward agriculture. This may be due in part to the fact that a majority of them are farmers or ranchers by occupation.

TABLE XXXV
 NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
 CLASSIFIED BY THEIR ESTIMATE OF
 PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL COUNTY
 INCOME DERIVED FROM SALE
 OF FARM PRODUCTS

Percentage of Income from Sale of Farm Products	Frequency Distribution	
	Number	Percent
80 percent or more	14	26.0
70 - 79 percent	10	18.5
60 - 69 percent	12	22.1
50 - 59 percent	4	7.4
40 - 49 percent	2	3.7
30 - 39 percent	3	5.5
20 - 29 percent	1	1.9
10 - 19 percent	0	0
No Opinion	7	13.0
Total	54	100.0

In the same context, commissioners were asked to estimate the percentage of total income in their respective counties which derived from

the sale of farm products. Commissioners manifested a great amount of uncertainty in response to this question. Their responses were categorized and a frequency distribution is shown in Table XXXV. It will be noted that the weight of the distribution tends toward the high percentage estimate. Over 44.0 percent of the commissioners estimated that the sale of farm products contributed 70.0 percent or more to total county income. Three out of every four commissioners estimated that the sale of farm products contributed 50.0 percent or more to total county income. In reality, in none of the counties in which interviews with commissioners were conducted did county farm income contribute more than 42.0 percent to total county personal income.

The ability of county commissioners to correctly estimate the percentage of total income derived from the sale of farm products is more vivid by observing Table XXXVI. The data which served as a standard, against which the correctness of county commissioners' responses were judged, was taken from County Building Block Data For Regional Analysis: Oklahoma (21). This source provided the most recent statistics obtainable for counties in Oklahoma. Income data for the year 1962 were used, since it was the last year they were available. Total personal income and farm income were presented for each county. The percentage of farm income in relation to total personal income was calculated for each county and was used to categorize the responses reported in Table XXXVI.

Only 3.7 percent of the commissioners correctly estimated (within 10.0 percent of the actual figure) the percentage of total county income which came from the sale of farm products. Almost 4.0 percent of the commissioners over-estimated the percentage from agriculture by

10.0 to 25.0 percent. The remainder grossly over-estimated agriculture's contribution to county income. Eighty percent, or 4 out of 5 commissioners over estimated by more than 25.0 percent. None of the commissioners under-estimated agriculture's contribution. Thirteen percent of the commissioners refused to venture an estimate in response to this question.

TABLE XXXVI
 FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
 ACCORDING TO THEIR ABILITY TO ESTIMATE THE
 PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL INCOME DERIVED FROM
 SALE OF FARM PRODUCTS

Estimate	Frequency Distribution	
	Number	Percent
Correct (within 10% of actual figure)	2	3.7
Over-Estimated percentage from agriculture by 10 - 25%	2	3.7
Over-Estimated percentage from agriculture by more than 25%	43	79.6
Under-Estimated percentage from agriculture	0	0
No response	7	13.0
Total	54	100.0

Who Has Benefited?

Table XXXVII presents responses of county commissioners to a question concerning their view of the groups who have benefited most from the Cooperative Extension Service. Over two-thirds of the commissioners in the study viewed Extension as benefiting all of the people

of the county, while nearly one-fourth of the group saw it as benefiting all of agriculture, including the related occupations. Very few commissioners felt that progressive farmers were the primary beneficiaries of Extension's service. None of the commissioners viewed urban residents as the group who had most benefited from Extension work. Only 3.7 percent expressed no opinion.

TABLE XXXVII
 FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
 ACCORDING TO THEIR VIEW OF GROUPS WHO HAVE
 BENEFITED MOST FROM EXTENSION

	Frequency Distribution	
	Number	Percent
Farmers, only	2	3.7
Urban residents (From technical information they receive)	0	0
All of agriculture and related occupations	13	24.1
All people of the county	37	68.5
No opinion	2	3.7
Total	54	100.0

The foregoing data seems to indicate that the majority of commissioners view Extension's scope of responsibility as rather broad and that it has benefited multi-facets of our society.

County extension personnel occasionally have been accused of spending too much time working with the larger, more progressive farmers and not enough time working with the little farmer. The investi-

gator desired to assess county commissioners' reaction concerning the validity of this criticism. A statement of the criticism was included in the interview schedule and commissioners were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with it. Table XXXVIII shows commissioners' responses to this item. Slightly over one-half of the commissioners disagreed with the statement while another 11.0 percent strongly disagreed with it. Commissioners expressing disagreement with the statement would often remark that they felt that their extension agents worked equally well with all people of the county regardless of size of operation or other factors.

TABLE XXXVIII

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
ACCORDING TO THEIR VIEWS OF THE VALIDITY OF
THE CRITICISM THAT EXTENSION SPENDS TOO
MUCH TIME WORKING WITH THE LARGER
FARMER

Opinion	Frequency Distribution	
	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	2	3.7
Agree	16	29.7
Disagree	28	51.9
Strongly Disagree	6	11.0
No Opinion	2	3.7
Total	54	100.0

In contrast, about 30.0 percent of the commissioners agreed and 3.7 percent strongly agreed that extension personnel spend too much

time with larger farmers in relation to smaller operators. Although a sizeable percentage of the commissioners agreed with the statement, agreement did not necessarily carry with it criticism. Several commissioners hastened to explain that Extension best helps those who want to be helped and that often the more progressive farmers of the community are the ones who avail themselves of what the Extension Service has to offer. About 4.0 percent expressed no opinion regarding the matter.

TABLE XXXIX
 FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
 ACCORDING TO THEIR VIEW OF WHETHER EXTENSION
 HAS ANY RESPONSIBILITY TO PEOPLE WHO
 MIGRATE OFF THE FARM IN HELPING
 THEM PREPARE FOR OTHER
 EMPLOYMENT

County Commissioner Response	Frequency Distribution	
	Number	Percent
No	15	27.8
Yes	35	64.8
No Opinion	4	7.4
Total	54	100.0

As pointed out in Chapter I, Oklahoma has sustained a substantial reduction in rural population since 1950. The loss which has occurred in most of the state's 77 counties, has primarily been due to voluntary off-the-farm migration. In most counties the younger people make up a high percentage of this group. Does the Extension Service have any responsibility to these people in helping them prepare themselves

for other types of employment? This question was propounded to the county commissioners in this study. Their responses are reported in Table XXXIX. Almost two-thirds of the respondents felt that the Extension Service does have a responsibility to these people, while 27.8 percent responded "no" to the question. Slightly over 7 percent indicated "no opinion." Several commissioners expressed the attitude that Extension's first responsibility was to help these people stay on the farm rather than to help prepare them for other employment.

The commissioners who answered the above question affirmatively, were asked to express their opinion of what Extension's responsibility to off-the-farm migrants should be and how the organization should attempt to fulfill it. A number of commissioners simply stated that they did not feel competent to express an opinion about Extension's responsibility in the matter. Of those who did express opinions to this open-ended question, there was little unanimity of agreement discernable among the responses. The classified responses are listed in Table XL. The area of responsibility suggested most often was "broadening the 4-H club program." Eleven commissioners indicated that through increased 4-H enrollment, expanded project offering, additional emphasis on citizenship, leadership, and public speaking training, Extension could best fulfill its responsibility to these young people. Other commissioners suggested that Extension needed to "provide more vocational information" to young people while others mentioned the need to "encourage these young people to prepare themselves for off-the-farm employment by going to college." As noted in the table, three other suggestions were made by a minimal number of commissioners.

TABLE XL

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ACCORDING TO
THEIR VIEW OF EXTENSION'S RESPONSIBILITY TO OFF-THE-FARM
MIGRANTS IN HELPING THEM PREPARE
FOR OTHER EMPLOYMENT

How should Extension fulfill it's responsibility?	Frequency Distribution	
	Number N=35	Percent
By providing more vocational information	4	11.5
By broadening the 4-H program	11	31.4
By encouraging them to go to college	4	11.5
By showing the advantages of agri-business	2	5.7
By tests and counseling to determine aptitudes	1	2.8
By conducting adult education programs	1	2.8
Don't know	14	40.0

Working Relationships

Since the thesis of this study was that there might be some relationship between county commissioners' appraisal of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service and the way they financially support it, it was considered necessary to determine how they felt about their working relationship with the Extension Service both at the county and state level. Tables XLI and XLII present the responses to these items. The data in Table XLI indicate that all 54 commissioners in the study were satisfied with their working relationship with the Extension Service in their county.

TABLE XLI

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS SATISFACTION
CONCERNING THEIR WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH
THE EXTENSION SERVICE IN THEIR COUNTY

Response	Frequency Distribution	
	Number	Percent
Satisfied	54	100.0
Not Satisfied	0	0
Total	54	100.0

TABLE XLII

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ACCORDING
TO THEIR ABILITY TO RECALL A FAVORABLE OR UNFAVORABLE
EVENT PERFORMED BY EXTENSION

Question	Percent Answering			Total Percent
	Yes	No	No Opin.	
Can you recall a favorable event?	77.7	20.4	1.9	100.0
Can you recall an unfavorable event?	3.7	94.4	1.9	100.0

Concerning county commissioners working relationships with the Extension Service at the state level, Table XLIII shows that 96.3 percent indicated they were satisfied while only two commissioners responded "not satisfied." The reason for dissatisfaction expressed by one commissioner was: "Each county should be informed as to what

is going on before any legislative action occurs relative to any financial increase expected from the county." The other respondent felt "there is no need for District Extension Directors to meet with the county commissioners relative to budget matters."

TABLE XLIII

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS SATISFACTION
CONCERNING THEIR WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE
EXTENSION SERVICE AT THE STATE LEVEL

Response	Frequency Distribution	
	Number	Percent
Satisfied	52	96.3
Not Satisfied	2	3.7
Total	54	100.0

Sources of Information and Influence

County commissioners were shown a series of statements concerning sources of information and influence and were asked to indicate which of these they considered important in determining their understanding and appraisal of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service. Table XLIV presents the data relative to this question. Since this item provided for multiple responses the total number of responses exceeds 54 and the percentages total more than 100.

"Personal contact with county Extension agents" ranked first as a source of information and influence with 85.2 percent of the commissioners selecting this response. The second ranked source of influence was "comments passed on to me by farmers and others in the

county." Almost 52.0 percent of the commissioners indicated this statement. "Listening to extension radio programs and reading their bulletins and newspaper articles" received third priority as a source of influence and information with 42.6 percent of the commissioners so indicating. Over 35.0 percent of the commissioners suggested that their "children's contact with the 4-H agents" had been influential in determining their understanding and appraisal of the Extension Service. As may be noted in Table XLIV, less than one out of five commissioners mentioned each of the other sources of influence listed.

TABLE XLIV

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ACCORDING TO
THEIR VIEWS OF THE MOST IMPORTANT SOURCES
OF INFORMATION ABOUT EXTENSION

Source of Information	Frequency Distribution		
	Number (N=54)	Percent	Rank
Personal contact with Extension agents	46	85.2	1
Wife's contact with Home Economist	9	16.6	6
Children's contact with 4-H agents	19	35.2	4
Comments by other county commissioners	10	18.5	5
Comments by farmers and others	28	51.8	2
Contact with state Extension personnel	6	11.1	7
Extension radio programs, etc.	23	42.6	3
Others	1	1.9	8

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The purpose of this chapter is to present the results of statistical analysis of the data. The .05 level of probability was used to judge the significance of all statistical tests.

The results in this chapter are organized and presented to answer questions four and five expressed in the statement of purpose in Chapter I.

Comparison of Cognition and Appraisal Scores to Level of Financial Support by Counties

Question 4: What is the relationship between county commissioners' cognition and appraisal of the Cooperative Extension Service and their level of financial support to extension work?

Since separate knowledge and appraisal scores were obtained, this question must be answered by analyzing the relationship of each facet-knowledge and appraisal-to level of financial support. The Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis by Ranks test described by Siegel (26, p. 184) was used to answer each facet of this question.

The analysis of the relationship between county commissioners' knowledge about extension and their level of financial support is presented in Table XLV. The calculated H value of 6.53 exceeded the tabled value of 5.99 associated with a probability of .05. This result indicated that significant differences existed among knowledge scores

of commissioners in the high, medium, and low level groups.

Comparisons between pairs of groups computed by Mann-Whitney U test (26, p. 116) are presented in Table XLVI. Obtained U values of 98.5 and 84 calculated between the high level group and the low level group and between the medium level group and the low level group, respectively, were less than the critical value of 99 associated with a .05 level of probability. Since this test requires an observed U to be equal to or less than the tabled value to be significant, the results indicate that county commissioners in the high and medium level groups had significantly higher knowledge scores than commissioners in the low level group. This finding would suggest some association between commissioners' knowledge about the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service and their financial support of the work.

An observed U value of 146 calculated between the high level group and the medium level group exceeded the critical value of 99 associated with a probability of .05. This result indicates that significant differences did not exist between county commissioners' knowledge scores in these two groups.

The analysis of the relationship between county commissioners' appraisal of extension and their level of financial support is presented in Table XLVII. The computed H value of 1.24 was less than the tabled value of 5.99 associated with the probability of .05. This result indicated that significant differences did not exist among county commissioners' appraisal scores within the three groups.

TABLE XLV

KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' KNOWLEDGE
OF EXTENSION IN RELATION TO THEIR LEVEL OF
FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF EXTENSION

Level of Financial Support	N	Sum of Ranks of Knowledge Scores	Average Ranks
High	18	574.5	31.91
Medium	18	555.0	30.83
Low	18	355.5	19.75
$H = 6.53$		df:2	$.05 > p > .02$

TABLE XLVI

MANN-WHITNEY U COMPARISONS BETWEEN PAIRS OF LEVELS OF
FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF EXTENSION IN RELATION
TO KNOWLEDGE OF EXTENSION.

Groups	N	Sum of Ranks	Average Ranks	<u>U</u>	Critical Value of <u>U</u>
High vs Low	18	396.5	22.03	98.5	99
Medium vs Low	18	409.0	22.72	84	99
High vs Medium	18	269.5	14.97	146	99
	18	349.0	19.39		
	18	257.0	14.28		
	18	317.0	17.61		

TABLE XLVII

KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' APPRAISAL
OF EXTENSION IN RELATION TO THEIR LEVEL OF
FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF EXTENSION

Level of Financial Support	N	Sum of Ranks of Appraisal Scores	Average Ranks
High	18	483.0	26.83
Medium	18	553.0	30.72
Low	18	449.0	24.94
<u>H</u> = 1.24		df:2	.70 > p > .50

Comparison of Cognition and Appraisal Scores to
Classification Variables of Age, Tenure,
Education, Occupation and Involvement

Question 5: What classification variables appear to be associated with differences in level of knowledge about and appraisal of the Extension Service?

Five classification variables were selected to test in relation to knowledge scores and appraisal scores. The variables of age, tenure, education, occupation and involvement will be considered in this section.

The analysis of the relationship between age of county commissioners and their knowledge about extension is presented in Table XLVIII. The calculated H value of 2.62 was less than the tabled value of 7.82 associated with the .05 level of probability. This result indicated that significant differences in knowledge scores did not exist among the four age categories of commissioners.

TABLE XLVIII

KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS'
KNOWLEDGE OF EXTENSION IN RELATION
TO AGE OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Age	N	Sum of Ranks of Knowledge Scores	Average Ranks
30-39	4	109.0	27.25
40-49	18	552.0	30.66
50-59	18	510.0	28.33
60 and over	14	314.0	22.42
<u>H</u> = 2.62		df:3	.50 > p > .30

TABLE XLIX

KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS'
APPRAISAL OF EXTENSION IN RELATION TO
AGE OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Age	N	Sum of Ranks of Appraisal Scores	Average Ranks
30-39	4	120.5	30.12
40-49	18	428.0	23.77
50-59	18	536.0	29.77
60 and over	14	400.5	28.60
<u>H</u> = 1.54		df:3	.70 > p > .50

Table XLIX presents an analysis of the association between age of

county commissioners and their appraisal of the Extension Service. The computed H value of 1.54 was less than the tabled value of 7.82 associated with a probability of .05. This finding indicates that significant differences in appraisal scores did not exist between county commissioners in the four age categories.

TABLE L
KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' KNOWLEDGE
OF EXTENSION IN RELATION TO THEIR TENURE
AS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Tenure	N	Sum of Ranks of Knowledge Scores	Average Ranks
4 years or less	14	373.5	26.68
5-9 years	26	765.5	29.44
10-14 years	6	150.0	25.00
15 years or more	8	196.0	24.50
$H = .86$		df:3	$.90 > p > .80$

An analysis of the relationship between county commissioners tenure and their knowledge about Extension is reported in Table L. The computed H value of .86 is far below the tabled value of 7.82 associated with the .05 level of probability. This result indicated that significant differences did not exist between county commissioners knowledge scores in the various tenure classifications.

TABLE LI
 KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' APPRAISAL
 OF EXTENSION IN RELATION TO THEIR TENURE
 AS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Tenure	N	Sum of Ranks of Appraisal Scores	Average Ranks
4 years or less	14	383.0	27.35
5-9 years	26	687.0	26.42
10-14 years	6	128.5	21.41
15 years or more	8	286.5	35.81
<u>H</u> = 3.23		df:3	.50 > p > .30

Table LI presents the analysis of the relationship between county commissioners tenure and their appraisal of the Extension Service. The obtained H value of 3.32 was less than the tabled value of 7.82 required for significance at the .05 probability level. This result indicated that significant differences in county commissioners appraisal scores did not exist among the four tenure categories.

The analysis of the relationship between county commissioners knowledge of extension and their level of educational attainment is reported in Table LII. The calculated H value of 11.5 exceeded the tabled value of 7.82 associated with a probability of .05. This result indicated that significant differences in knowledge scores did exist among the four educational attainment levels.

TABLE LII

KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' KNOWLEDGE
OF EXTENSION IN RELATION TO THE HIGHEST
EDUCATIONAL LEVEL ATTAINED

Highest Level Attained	N	Sum of Ranks of Knowledge Scores	Average Ranks
Grade School	12	225.0	18.75
High School	26	718.0	27.61
Some College	12	344.5	28.71
College Graduate	4	197.5	49.37
$\underline{H} = 11.50$		df:3	$.01 > p > .001$

Comparisons between pairs of groups computed by Mann-Whitney U tests are presented in Table LIII. Due to differences in the size of N between pairs of groups, the table shows either a computed \underline{H} value or a computed \underline{Z} value. An observed \underline{H} value is judged against a critical value for significance at .05 probability level while an observed \underline{Z} value provides for an exact probability. Obtained \underline{U} values of 6 and 1 calculated between the some college group and the college graduate group and between the grade school group and the college graduate group, respectively, were less than the critical value of 7 associated with .05 level of probability. A calculated \underline{Z} of 2.83 computed between the high school group and the college graduate group exceeded the critical value of 1.96. These results indicated that county commissioners who were college graduates were significantly more knowledgeable about the Extension Service than were commissioners

TABLE LIII

MANN-WHITNEY U COMPARISONS BETWEEN PAIRS OF
EDUCATIONAL LEVELS IN RELATION TO
KNOWLEDGE OF EXTENSION

Groups	N	Sum of Ranks	Average Rank	<u>U</u> or <u>Z</u>	Critical Value or Probability
Some College vs College Graduate	12 4	84.0 52.0	7.00 13.00	<u>U</u> = 6	c.v. = 7
High School vs College Graduate	26 4	356.5 108.5	13.71 27.12	<u>Z</u> = 2.83	p = .0046
Grade School vs College Graduate	12 4	79.0 57.0	6.58 14.25	<u>U</u> = 1	c.v. = 7
High School vs Some College	26 12	503.5 237.5	19.36 19.79	<u>Z</u> = .11	p = .9124
Grade School vs High School	12 26	181.0 560.0	15.08 21.53	<u>Z</u> = 1.67	p = .0950
Grade School vs Some College	12 12	121.0 179.0	10.08 14.91	<u>U</u> = 43	c.v. = 37

who had attained either the grade school level, the high school level, or the some college level. Significant differences did not exist between the other pairs of groups.

Table LIV reports the analysis of county commissioners' appraisal of extension in relation to the highest educational level attained.

The observed H value of 2.21 was less than the tabled value of 7.82 necessary for significance at the .05 level of probability. The results of this test indicated that significant differences in appraisal scores did not exist among county commissioners in the four educational attainment levels.

TABLE LIV
KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' APPRAISAL
OF EXTENSION IN RELATION TO THE HIGHEST
EDUCATIONAL LEVEL ATTAINED

Highest Level Attained	N	Sum of Ranks of Appraisal Scores	Average Ranks
Grade School	12	312.0	26.00
High School	26	760.5	29.23
Some College	12	275.0	22.91
College Graduate	4	137.5	34.37
$H = 2.21$	$df:2$	$.70 > p > .50$	

An analysis of county commissioners' knowledge of extension in relation to their level of involvement with extension is reported in Table LV. Involvement scores were divided into three approximately equal groups to accomplish this analysis. A calculated H value of 4.03 was less than the tabled value of 5.99 associated with a probability of .05. Though average ranks shown in Table LV indicate that county commissioners in the high and medium involvement levels had appreciably higher knowledge scores than commissioners in the low involvement level, differences were not great enough to be statistical-

ly significant at the .05 probability level.

TABLE LV
KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' KNOWLEDGE
OF EXTENSION IN RELATION TO THEIR LEVEL OF
INVOLVEMENT WITH EXTENSION

Level of Involvement	N	Sum of Ranks of Knowledge Scores	Average Ranks
High (Scores 13-17)	20	617	30.85
Medium (Scores 9-12)	19	590	31.05
Low (Scores 1-8)	15	278	18.53
$H = 4.03$		df:2	$.20 > p > .10$

TABLE LVI
KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' APPRAISAL
OF EXTENSION IN RELATION TO THEIR LEVEL OF
INVOLVEMENT WITH EXTENSION

Level of Involvement	N	Sum of Ranks of Appraisal Scores	Average Ranks
High (Scores 13-17)	20	627.5	31.37
Medium (Scores 9-12)	19	405.5	21.34
Low (Scores 1-8)	15	452.0	30.13
$H = 4.52$		df:2	$.20 > p > .10$

The analysis of county commissioners' appraisal of extension in

relation to their level of involvement with extension is presented in Table LVI. The computed \underline{H} of 4.52 was less than the tabled value of 5.99 necessary for significance at a probability of .05. Although differences in commissioners appraisal score approached the .10 probability level, they were not great enough to be statistically significant at the .05 probability level.

TABLE LVII
MANN-WHITNEY U TEST OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS'
KNOWLEDGE OF EXTENSION IN
RELATION TO OCCUPATION

Occupation	N	Sum of Ranks	Average Ranks
Farmer or Rancher	34	932.5	27.42
Other Selected Occupations	20	552.50	27.62
$\underline{Z} = .044$		$p = .9680$	

The analysis of county commissioners' knowledge of extension in relation to their occupation is presented in Table LVII. The Mann-Whitney U test yielded a computed \underline{Z} value of .044 which was far below the critical value of 1.96 associated with the .05 probability. This result indicated that significant differences in knowledge scores did not exist among county commissioners of differing occupations.

The Mann-Whitney U analysis of county commissioners' appraisal of extension in relation to their occupation is reported in Table LVIII. The calculated \underline{Z} value of .268 is less than the critical value of 1.96 necessary for significance at the .05 level. This result indicated

that significant differences in appraisal scores did not exist among county commissioners of various occupations.

A summary of the comparative results of the analysis appears in Table LIX.

TABLE LVIII

MANN-WHITNEY U TEST OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' APPRAISAL OF
EXTENSION IN RELATION TO OCCUPATION

Occupation	N	Sum of Ranks	Average Ranks
Farmer or Rancher	34	949.50	27.92
Other Selected Occupation	20	535.50	26.77
$Z = .268$		$p = .7948$	

TABLE LIX

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF KNOWLEDGE AND APPRAISAL SCORES
IN RELATION TO SELECTED VARIABLES

Variables Tested	Probabilities that indicate	
	Significant Difference *	No Significant Difference *
Level of Support vs Knowledge	.05 > p > .02	
Level of Support vs Appraisal		.70 > p > .50
Age vs Knowledge		.50 > p > .30
Age vs Appraisal		.70 > p > .50
Tenure vs Knowledge		.90 > p > .80
Tenure vs Appraisal		.50 > p > .30
Educational Level Attained vs Knowledge	.01 > p > .001	
Educational Level Attained Appraisal		.70 > p > .50
Involvement Level vs Knowledge		.20 > p > .10
Involvement Level vs Appraisal		.20 > p > .10
Occupation vs Knowledge		.96
Occupation vs Appraisal		.79

* At the .05 level of significance

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The primary purpose of this study was to determine county commissioners' cognition and appraisal of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service. A total of 54 county commissioners were selected from 18 counties in Oklahoma to participate in the study. One third were chosen from each of three contribution ranges labeled high, medium and low levels. These levels represented the percentage of county contribution to the county Extension budget. One major purpose of the study was to determine if significant relationships existed between level of financial support and commissioners' knowledge and appraisal of Extension. Several classification variables were also considered in relation to knowledge and appraisal.

An interview schedule was constructed and used in personal interviews with the 54 commissioners selected to the sample. Data pertaining to nine major areas were obtained from the commissioners. With the exception of personal data, these areas dealt with commissioners' knowledge and appraisal of various facets of Cooperative Extension work. The findings to the interview questions are reported in Chapter IV in percentages and rank orders.

A method of scoring was devised to yield an appraisal score and a knowledge score. These scores were analyzed in relation to selected variables to determine if significant differences existed. Non-

parametric statistical tests were used for these analyses which are presented in Chapter V.

Conclusions and Implications

The conclusions based on the results of this study are presented in this section in response to each of the five questions which served to guide this investigation. Implications follow conclusions for each respective question.

Question 1: What is county commissioners' cognition and appraisal of the purpose, organizational structure and financing of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service?

Conclusions: A sizeable percentage of the county commissioners interviewed indicated an understanding of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service as a problem-solving organization structured to help farmers and homemakers with immediate problems. Only a small percentage of the commissioners felt that Extension's purpose was to provide assistance to urban people.

County commissioners were fairly knowledgeable about the organizational affiliation of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service. However, in spite of the fact that over 68.0 percent of the commissioners associated the Extension Service with county government, Oklahoma State University and the U.S.D.A., a sizeable proportion also associated it with other agricultural agencies, which indicated a limited understanding of its precise organizational affiliation.

Eighty-seven percent of the county commissioners indicated they were satisfied with the present financial arrangements in spite of the fact that during the year prior to the study, the State Extension

office had operationalized a new formula, which, in effect, shifted more of the financial responsibility for Extension work to county government. However, many of them hastened to add that they could not assume any more of the load in the immediate future.

A slight majority of the commissioners felt that Extension services should be maintained on a "no charge" basis.

Implications: These findings suggest the need for consideration of several things. First, personnel of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service need to apprise county commissioners as to the broader scope of the many responsibilities with which they are charged, if they contemplate survival in our continually changing milieu. This is especially true in view the many recently added responsibilities in connection with University Extension.

Second, these Extension Service workers, at all levels, might do well to keep county commissioners better informed concerning Extension organizational structure by clarifying for them the agencies with which Extension is "officially connected" in contradistinction to those with which it has only a "working relationship."

Third, if any further consideration is given by the Extension Service to the possibility of local government assuming more financial responsibility for extension work, it should be cautiously approached. This is especially true as long as the only criterion governing county participation is a subjective determination of adequacy by the Board of County Commissioners. White (34, p. 9) suggests: "If the Cooperative Extension Service expects to receive support at the county level, county commissioners must be involved more in planning, executing, and evaluating county Extension programs."

Although a slight majority of commissioners felt that Extension Services should be free to the consumer, a rather large percentage of them felt that charges might be made for some services. This fact might suggest the advisability of exploring additional fee-charge possibilities.

Question 2: What is the cognition of county commissioners regarding the amount of time and effort that Extension should devote to various clientele groups and the relative importance of certain county director activities?

Conclusions: County commissioners almost unanimously agreed that "organizing and coordinating clubs and associations" should have first priority as an activity of the county extension director. They felt that county directors should give second priority to "advising and consulting with farm groups in the county" and give lowest priority, of the nine suggested activities, "to training local leaders." "Providing information directly to farmers" was only rated third while "acting as secretary of and performing other similar services for fairs, shows, etc." ranked fairly high; fifth.

Concerning the relative importance of various clientele groups, county commissioners felt that "small subsistence farms" is Extension's most important clientele group, followed closely in importance by "family size farm" operators; notwithstanding the fact that it is becoming increasingly difficult to make small units economically feasible.

Although the "large commercial farm" group was rated only fourth, 74.0 percent of the commissioners felt that Extension either has "some" or a "great deal" of responsibility to this group. Commission-

ers indicated they felt Extension should devote the least amount of time and effort to "businesses serving all consumers."

Implications: Pertaining to county director activities, this implies that Extension Service personnel might do well to keep county commissioners informed about the priority placed on county director activities and Extension clientele groups, and the rationale for so doing. This would undoubtedly lead to better understanding by commissioners concerning Extension objectives, how best to accomplish them and, hopefully, would further contribute to a higher correlation between views of extension administration and county commissioners regarding these two facets of extension work.

Question 3: What is the cognition and appraisal of county commissioners concerning the programs and professional staff of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service?

Conclusions: Over 92.0 percent of county commissioners were knowledgeable about Extension's work with boys and girls enrolled in 4-H clubs. Eighty-seven percent knew of Extension's efforts in the area of Agricultural Production. Commissioners were least aware of Extension's efforts in Family Living and Public Affairs.

Concerning the relative importance of nine specified program areas, county commissioners rated Agricultural Production and Youth Development first and second, respectively, while granting Family Living only eighth place. Public Affairs was considered least important of the nine areas listed.

Sixty-three percent of the commissioners felt that Extension could appropriately place more emphasis on the area of Marketing, while 48.1 percent indicated they felt that Agricultural Production

should be given more attention.

Generally speaking, county commissioners were apparently well acquainted with county extension personnel. A majority of the commissioners interviewed indicated they knew the County Director "very well" while a smaller percentage of them felt they knew the Extension Home Economist equally as well. However, responses clearly substantiated the belief that commissioners acquaintance with state extension personnel was quite low.

County commissioners were fairly knowledgeable about the county extension staff, with 74.0 percent aware of its exact size.

Their appraisal of the qualification of the county extension staff was very favorable. Nearly 90.0 percent felt that the county staff is "very well" qualified for their positions. Slightly over three-fourths of the respondents felt that county Extension agents are keeping up-to-date "very well" on changes in agriculture and home-making. Sixty-one percent of the commissioners felt that the County Director could "nearly always" provide the average farmer with assistance in solving specialized farm problems.

As to their appraisal of the size of the county extension staff, 74.0 percent of the commissioners were satisfied with its present size. A slight majority of the commissioners did not envision any future need to either increase or decrease its size. However, 42.6 percent felt that the staff size "should be increased slightly" as future needs and demands justify.

Implications: In view of these findings, several implications would seem apparent. Since Oklahoma Statutes provide for two year terms for county commissioners, turnover of membership on boards of

county commissioners is fairly rapid. Because of this fact, Extension agents need to carry out an on-going public relations program which clearly articulates to county commissioners and other people the purposes, organizational structure, programs, administration and professional staff of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service.

Generally, people tend to assume that other people are more knowledgeable than they actually are about specific subjects of interest to the individuals making the assumption. Therefore, there is a need for continual effort to keep county commissioners and other clientele groups informed about areas of program emphasis as well as other facets of Extension work, to enhance their understanding and appraisal of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service.

Specifically, if homemaking is to be maintained as one of the three major areas of Cooperative Extension work, concerted efforts need to be directed toward up-grading the relative importance and general image of Family Living, as a program area, in the minds of county commissioners.

Two findings of this study that lend credence to the assumption that county commissioners esteem 4-H club work highly as an Extension function were: (1) the fact that commissioners were most aware of Extension's efforts in the youth development area, and the fact that (2) county commissioners rated youth development second, behind agricultural production by only a slight margin, in terms of relative importance. These results might suggest the need for the state Cooperative Extension Service administration to consider giving additional emphasis to the 4-H club program by expanding its programs and professional staff.

County extension agents should be continually cognizant of the need to increase their professional competence in order to maintain a high appraisal from county commissioners as well as other clientele groups.

A formally organized work-load study in each county involving county commissioners, might profitably be undertaken by the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service in order to project future needs in terms of programs and professional extension staff. Long range plans for financing such should be worked out in conjunction with county commissioners.

This study pointed up to the author the fact that most county commissioners' knowledge and appraisal of the Cooperative Extension Service rarely extends beyond county boundaries. Generally speaking, they are not aware of what the Extension Service is doing in other counties. Their image of the Cooperative Extension Service is largely dependent upon what they see, hear, understand and recognize concerning their local county extension program and staff. Because of this localized orientation and provincial outlook, the state Extension administration needs to involve county commissioners in district-wide, area-wide, and state-wide programs to increase their understanding and appreciation of Cooperative Extension work on a broader base than county.

Question 4: What is the relationship between county commissioners' cognition and appraisal of the Cooperative Extension Service and their level of financial support?

Conclusions: The result of statistical analysis indicated that a significant relationship existed between county commissioners'

knowledge of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service and their level of financial contribution to Extension work. Although a cause-and-effect relationship is not inferred, there does appear to be a significant association between these two variables. However, no significant relationship was found to exist between county commissioners' appraisal of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service and their level of financial support to Extension work.

Implications: Since there was a significant relationship between level of financial support and commissioners' knowledge of Extension, it might be to Extension's advantage to carry on a dynamic public relations program which would effectively communicate relevant information concerning Extension programs, purposes, organization, personnel and administration.

Question 5: What classification variables appear to be associated with differences in level of knowledge about and appraisal of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service?

Conclusions: Classifications variables concerning age, tenure, educational level attained, involvement and occupation were analyzed in relation to county commissioners' knowledge scores and appraisal scores. Of the five variables examined, educational level attained was the only one which showed a significant relationship to knowledge scores. None of the five variables were significantly related to appraisal scores.

Limitations

Although random sampling procedure was used in selecting the counties included in the study, no claim is made that the 54 county

commissioners interviewed are truly representative of the entire population. Therefore, a primary limitation is that the findings of the study should not be generalized beyond the scope of the investigation. They may rather be interpreted as simply indicative of county commissioners' knowledge and appraisal of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service.

Another limitation clearly recognizable is that the interview schedule may not have been precise enough to derive an accurate measure of the respondents knowledge and appraisal of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service. Though every attempt was made to assure uniform understanding of the questions, it is recognized that commissioners may not have interpreted and understood each question alike.

Closely allied to this is the further limitation that county commissioners responses may not have been completely authentic in view of the fact that they were aware that the interviewer had been employed by the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service.

Recommendations

In view of the findings of this study, several recommendations come to the mind of the author.

It is recommended that a more comprehensive study, involving county commissioners over the entire state, be conducted and the results compared with the findings of this study.

Variables other than those included in this study should be identified and investigated with county commissioners in relation to Cooperative Extension work. The writer feels that a particular need exists for additional research information concerning county com-

missioners' attitudes toward financing Extension work and concerning procedures for financing Extension work over the United States.

If the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service expects to continue to receive financial support from county government, it is recommended that an on-going public relations program be designed to communicate to county commissioners the purpose, the programs and the needs of Extension work in Oklahoma. The Oklahoma County Commissioners' Association should be maximally involved in informational type programs.

It is further recommended that county commissioners be involved in planning, executing and evaluating county Extension programs. This should enhance their evaluation and support of Extension work.

Studies similar to this one should be conducted with other clientele groups to assess their knowledge and appraisal of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service.

It is recommended that the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service be continually alert to opportunities to evaluate its work and to assess its image in order to enhance its flexibility, its effectiveness and its thrust as an agent of change in today's complex world.

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APPENDIX A

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

A STUDY OF THE OKLAHOMA COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION SERVICE

CODE NO. _____

1. Years served as a county commissioner (including this year).
 1. _____ 4 or less
 2. _____ 5-9
 3. _____ 10-14
 4. _____ 15 or more.

2. Place of residence _____

1. _____ Rural Farm	4. _____ City, 2,500-4,999
2. _____ Rural Non-Farm	5. _____ City, 5,000-9,999
3. _____ Village, under 2,500	6. _____ City, 10,000 & over.

3. Age at last birthday.

1. _____ 30 or younger	4. _____ 50-59
2. _____ 30-39	5. _____ 60 or more.
3. _____ 40-49	

4. Which of the following would include the highest grade you completed in school?
 1. _____ Grade School
 2. _____ High School
 3. _____ Attended college, but did not complete a degree
 4. _____ College graduate.

5. What is your main occupation?
 1. _____ Farmer or Rancher
 2. _____ Professional
 3. _____ Businessman, non-agricultural
 4. _____ Business, agriculturally related
 5. _____ Real Estate and Insurance
 6. _____ Retired
 7. _____ Other, specify.

6. In terms of rural or urban which category below would most nearly describe the type of county you feel you represent?
 1. _____ Almost complete rural
 2. _____ Mostly rural, but some urban
 3. _____ About evenly divided between rural and urban
 4. _____ Mostly urban, but some rural
 5. _____ Almost completely urban.

7. In relation to other sources of income, how important do you consider agriculture to be in your county? Would you say its:
 1. _____ Of practically no importance at all
 2. _____ Of little importance
 3. _____ Not very important
 4. _____ Important
 5. _____ Very important
 6. _____ Extremely important.

18. Other, specify.
19. I believe that completes most of the background information that I need. Now to talk about the Extension Service a little. As you understand it, what is the Cooperative Extension Service set up to do? What is its purpose?
20. As you see it, what group or groups in our society have benefitted most from our having a Cooperative Extension Service?
- (K & A) Are there any other groups that you feel benefit from having the Extension Service?
1. _____ See it as serving only progressive farmers. (+)
 2. _____ See urban residents benefitting from the direct information (+2)
 3. _____ See it as benefitting all of agriculture, including the related occupations. (+3)
 4. _____ See it as benefitting all of the people of the county. (+4)
- 21-29. Assuming that the activities of the County Extension Director could be grouped into the following, how would you rate them as to their importance in carrying on a good Extension program in this county?
-
1. Unimportant--no consideration. Please circle the number
 2. Not very important--very low which best describes the
 3. Important--average consider- importance you place on the
 4. Very important--high priority. activity.
 5. Most important--top priority.
 0. No opinion. 1 2 3 4 5 0
-
- (K) 21. Providing information directly to farmers and farm families through radio, newspapers, meetings, television, personal contacts, etc. 1 2 3 4 5 0
- (K) 22. Public relation activities with local groups and officials (attending luncheons with officials, speaking at civic clubs on farm problems, etc.) 1 2 3 4 5 0
- (K) 23. Advising and consulting with farm groups in the county (helping county farm organizations or county livestock association plan a program). 1 2 3 4 5 0

- (K) 24. Training local leaders who in turn provide information to others. 1 2 3 4 5 0

1. Unimportant--no consideration. Please circle the number
 2. Not very important--very low priority. which best describes the
 3. Important--average consideration. importance you place on the
 4. Very important--high priority. activity.
 5. Most important--top priority. 1 2 3 4 5 0
 0. No opinion.

- (K) 25. Participating in community affairs and activities (helping organize a community fair or show; helping develop a landscape plan for a local park or playground.) 1 2 3 4 5 0

- (K) 26. Representing and coordinating college and U.S.D.A. programs in the county (locating research plots for experiment stations; coordinating federal Brucellosis Program.) 1 2 3 4 5 0

- (K) 27. Organizing and coordinating clubs and associations (livestock associations, 4-H clubs, Home Demonstration Clubs, etc.) 1 2 3 4 5 0

- (K) 28. Program planning (interpreting local situations and needs, assisting a County Program Planning Group in planning the County Extension Program.) 1 2 3 4 5 0

- (K) 29. Acting as Secretary of and performing other similar services for association, fairs, shows, etc. 1 2 3 4 5 0

- 30-34. Listed below are 9 broad areas in which a County Extension Staff might attempt to carry out a program. Read through these and if you have any questions about what any of them mean, I'll try to answer them for you. Then I'd like to ask you a few questions concerning these areas.

1. Agricultural Production.
2. Marketing, Distribution, and Utilization of Agricultural Products.
3. Conservation, Development and Use of Natural Resources.
4. Management on the Farm and in the Home.
5. Family living.
6. Youth Development.
7. Leadership Development.
8. Community Improvement and Resource Development.
9. Public Affairs.

- (K) 30. In which of these areas do you feel Extension now conducts a program in this county?
 1. _____ 4. _____ 7. _____ (+1 for each of top 6 correctly identified.
 2. _____ 5. _____ 8. _____ ly identified.
 3. _____ 6. _____ 9. _____ -1 for each of top 6 correctly identified.)
- (A) 31. Of these nine areas, are there any that you feel Extension is now placing too much emphasis on?
 0. No 3. _____ 6. _____ (-1 for each area listed)
 1. _____ 4. _____ 7. _____
 2. _____ 5. _____ 9. _____
- (A) 32. Are there any that you feel do not receive enough emphasis?
 0. _____ 3. _____ 6. _____ (-1 for each area listed)
 1. _____ 4. _____ 7. _____
 3. _____ 6. _____ 9. _____
- (K) 33. Of these nine areas which three do you feel are the most important to the welfare of the people of this country and should therefore receive the most time and effort; not necessarily in order of importance?
 1. _____ 4. _____ 7. _____ (+3 for each correctly identified)
 2. _____ 5. _____ 8. _____
 3. _____ 6. _____ 9. _____
- (K) 34. While we recognize that all of these areas may be considered important the size of the staff, the resources they have available and the current situation in the county may be such that certain of these areas are not quite as important for Extension to work on as some others. Therefore, which three areas do you feel the Extension Staff in this county should devote the least attention to?
 1. _____ 4. _____ 7. _____ (+3 for each correctly identified)
 2. _____ 5. _____ 8. _____
 3. _____ 6. _____ 9. _____
- (A) 35. In terms of the amount of emphasis that Extension has placed on agricultural production, which statement below most nearly expresses your feelings?
 1. _____ Extension has placed "too much" emphasis on agricultural production. (-3)
 2. _____ Extension has placed "a little too much" emphasis on agricultural production. (-1)
 3. _____ Extension has placed "the right amount" of emphasis on agricultural production. (+3)
 4. _____ Extension needs to place "a little more" emphasis on agricultural production. (-1)
 5. _____ Extension needs to place "much more" emphasis on agricultural production. (-3)
 6. _____ No opinion. (-0)
- (A) 36. In terms of the amount of emphasis that Extension has placed on marketing, which statement below would most nearly ex-

press your feelings?

1. Extension has placed "too much" emphasis on marketing. (-3)
2. Extension has placed "a little too much" emphasis on marketing. (-1)
3. Extension has placed "the right amount" of emphasis on marketing. (+3)
4. Extension needs to place a "little more" emphasis on marketing. (-1)
5. Extension needs to place "much more" emphasis on marketing. (-3)
0. No opinion. (0)

(A) 37. If you heard someone make the following statement, what would be your immediate reaction: "Extension spends too much of its time working with the larger, more progressive farmers who don't really need their help and doesn't spend enough time working with the little farmer." Would you:

1. Strongly agree (-3)
2. Agree (-1)
3. Disagree (+1)
4. Strongly disagree (+3)
0. No opinion. (0)

38. As you have probably observed in this county, there has been some voluntary migration off the farm for a number of years. In most counties the younger people make up a high percentage of this group. Do you feel that the Extension Service has any responsibility to these people in helping them prepare themselves for other types of employment?

0. No 1. Yes

39. If yes, what responsibility do you feel the organization has and how should it attempt to fulfill it?

40-50. Extension workers have many requests for educational assistance with problems relating directly to agriculture, home-making, and 4-H Clubs. These requests come from a large number of different individuals and groups. In your opinion how much time and effort should Extension spend with each of the groups listed below?

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Not at all---no consideration | Please <u>circle</u> the number which best describes your opinion of the time, effort, and consideration that should be given. |
| 2. Not much ---minor consideration | |
| 3. Some ---average consideration | |
| 4. Great deal---major consideration | |
| 5. Most ---most time and effort | |
| 6. No opinion. | |
| | 1 2 3 4 5 0 |

FARM

- (K) 40. Large commercial farms. (2-3 times the size of the average farm in the county.) 1 2 3 4 5 0
- (K) 41. Average size family farms. 1 2 3 4 5 0
- (K) 42. Small subsistence farms. 1 2 3 4 5 0
- (K) 43. Part-Time Operator (works off farm more than 100 days per year) 1 2 3 4 5 0
- (K) 44. Farm organizations, farm commodity groups, etc. 1 2 3 4 5 0

NON-FARM

- (K) 45. Businesses supplying farmers (fertilizer, feed, machinery, fuel, credit.) 1 2 3 4 5 0
- (K) 46. Agriculture marketing firms (dairy plants, packing plants, etc.) 1 2 3 4 5 0
- (K) 47. Businesses serving all consumers (groceries, clothing, household equipment.) 1 2 3 4 5 0
- (K) 48. Rural, non-farm families (live in county but don't farm.) 1 2 3 4 5 0
- (K) 49. Town and village families (under 10,000 population.) 1 2 3 4 5 0
- (K) 50. Urban and city families (over 10,000 population.) 1 2 3 4 5 0
- (K) 51. As you know there is an Extension Service office in each of the counties. As you understand the way it is organized would you tell me which of the agencies listed below with which you believe Extension to be officially connected. (check all that apply)
1. _____ Oklahoma Department of Agriculture (-1)
 2. _____ U.S. Department of Agriculture (+1)
 3. _____ Oklahoma Department of Education (-1)
 4. _____ Oklahoma State University (+1)
 5. _____ The county government (+1)
 6. _____ The Soil Conservation Service (-1)
 7. _____ The Farmers Home Administration (-1)
 8. _____ ASC (agriculture stabilization) (-1)
 9. _____ None of the above. It is a separate state agency. (-1)
 0. _____ Don't know. (0)
52. There are several matters relating to the financing of Extension on which I would like very much to have your opinion. In Oklahoma at the present time, the source of Ex-

5. _____ It's much too small (+6)
 0. _____ No opinion (0)

(A) 70. In terms of future needs and demands for the services of the Cooperative Extension Service in this county, how do you feel about the size of the staff? Would you say:

1. _____ The size of the staff should be decreased a great deal (-6)
 2. _____ The size of the staff should be decreased slightly (-3)
 3. _____ The size of the staff should remain about the same (0)
 4. _____ The size of the staff should be increased slightly (+3)
 5. _____ The size of the staff should be increased a great deal (+6)
 0. _____ No opinion. (0)

71. Listed below is a series of statements concerning sources of information and influence that could be important in determining a person's understanding and appraisal of the Cooperative Extension Services. Would you mind telling me which of these you feel has been the most important in your case?

1. _____ My own personal contact and observation of the local county Extension agent
 2. _____ My wife's contact with the county Home Economist agent
 3. _____ My children's contact with the 4-H agents
 4. _____ From comments passed on to me by other county commissioners
 5. _____ From comments passed on to me by farmers and others in the county
 6. _____ My own contacts with representatives of the Extension service headquarters in Stillwater
 7. _____ From listening to their radio programs and reading their bulletins and newspaper articles
 8. _____ From comments passed on to me by fellow members of the Board of County Commissioners
 9. _____ Others, specify
 0. _____ Don't know

72. And now to conclude the interview. In your opinion, what areas are presently being neglected, in which you feel Extension could render an educational service in the future?

73. That completes the interview and I appreciate your cooperation very much. I wonder if there are other points concerning the Extension Service which we have not talked about that you feel are important. Do you have any other suggestions as to how the organization might be made more useful to the people of the State?

APPENDIX B

MAP SHOWING COUNTIES INCLUDED
IN THE STUDY

APPENDIX C

(Letter mailed to County Commissioners)

Dear Mr. _____;

Since County Commissioners occupy a position of leadership in the conduct of Cooperative Extension work in their respective counties, I am asking Commissioners from selected counties in Oklahoma to participate in a research study that I am conducting. Your county is one of those selected.

In this study, I will be interested in your ideas about and appraisal of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service. This study is part of my graduate work at Oklahoma State University.

To secure this information, I would like an opportunity to interview you, sometime during the month of April. The interview should not take longer than one hour. I will be telephoning you shortly, to get an appointment time and date to suit your convenience.

This study should be a worthwhile project and the results should be extremely valuable in planning future programs within the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service.

Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

Gordon L. Dowell

VITA

³
Gordon Leroy Dowell

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: A STUDY OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COGNITION AND APPRAISAL OF
THE OKLAHOMA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

Major Field: Educational Administration

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born at Stillwater, Oklahoma, December 9, 1932,
the son of Otis F. and Flora R. Dowell.

Education: Attended rural grade school in Payne County, Oklahoma;
graduated from Eureka High School in 1951. He was very
active in 4-H club work earning numerous honors. Received
the Bachelor of Science degree from Oklahoma State University,
with a major in Animal Husbandry, in May, 1955; received the
Master of Science degree from Oklahoma State University, with
a major in Rural Adult Education, in May, 1966; completed
requirements for the Doctor of Education degree in May, 1969.

Professional Experience: Entered the United States Army in July,
1955 and served until May, 1957; employed by the Oklahoma
Cooperative Extension Service as Seminole County Assistant,
and later, Associate County Agent from 1957 to 1966; served
as Staff Assistant, State 4-H Club Staff from January 1966
to June 1966: was granted leave from that position to pursue
doctorate at Oklahoma State University; received fellowship
from Southwestern Cooperative Educational Laboratory, Incor-
porated 1966 to 1967; served as graduate assistant, Depart-
ment of Education, Oklahoma State University from 1967 to
1968.