

# SOME ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ASPECTS OF PART-TIME FARMING IN OHIO

W. A. WAYT :: H. R. MOORE :: C. H. HILLMAN



OHIO AGRICULTURAL  
EXPERIMENT STATION  
Wooster, Ohio

## CONTENTS

I. Introduction .....	3
II. Part-Time Farmers—Who and Why? .....	11
III. The Farm Home, Conveniences, and Family Participa- tion in Community Affairs .....	24
IV. The Nonfarm Job .....	28
V. The Farm Operation .....	35
VI. Summary and Conclusions .....	54

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The research reported in this publication is a contribution from the Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station as a collaborator under the North Central Regional Cooperative Research Project, NC-15, "How Young Farm Families Get Established in Farming." The authors wish to acknowledge both the suggestions of the committee for NC-15 and the financial assistance received from that project.

# SOME ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ASPECTS OF PART-TIME FARMING IN OHIO

W. A. WAYT, H. R. MOORE and C. H. HILLMAN<sup>1</sup>

## I. INTRODUCTION

Farming had been characterized as a way of life as well as a way to make a living. This statement still contains a core of truth. On the other hand, it is obvious that under current conditions less difference exists than formerly between how country and city folk live and work. One reason for this narrowed gap is the fact that a substantial share of our farm population is also engaged in some other type of employment. For instance, as applied to Ohio, the most recent census indicates that nearly two-fifths of the farm operators worked off the farm 100 days or more in 1954.

### Why Study Part-Time Farming?

One reason is that more people are engaging in it and so far as can be foreseen this trend will continue. Is it a permanent and important feature of the rural way of life? If so, is it to be an urban fringe development or will it be widely dispersed throughout all our rural areas? To what extent are our part-time farmers people with an urban background who are simply seeking some elbow-room and the other amenities of country living; to what extent are they rural people seeking broader employment opportunities without changing their place of residence? What are the objectives of the part-time farmers—country living, security, more cash income, a start in farming? What are the problems, perhaps unforeseen, of people engaged in part-time farming? What is the impact of part-time farming on the economic and social organization of the rural community and on family life? Is it changing the outlook for rural areas and for commercial agriculture? Does part-time farming pay? This bulletin provides some information bearing on these questions—information assembled largely by personal contact with part-time farmers.

---

<sup>1</sup>William A. Wayt, Assistant Professor and H. Russell Moore, Associate Professor, Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology; Christine H. Hillman, Associate Professor, Department of Home Economics; Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station.

## Part-Time Farms and Part-Time Farmers

A distinction needs to be made between what may be considered a part-time farm and a part-time farmer. A farm, too small to provide productive full-time employment (or a living at some accepted standard) to an operator and his family can be considered a part-time farm. This is gearing the definition to the capacity of an operating unit of land and the associated resources to produce some limited range of income.<sup>2</sup>

A different approach is to gear the definition either to the occupational activity of the entire family—because it is a unit of production and consumption—or to the occupational activity of the farm operator. Under usual conditions, the farm operator provides the management, does much of the physical labor, and is the principal bread-winner of the family.<sup>3</sup>

The present study identifies part-time farming with a division of the operator's time between farming and other employment. Following is a definition of what was considered a farm and a subclassification of part-time farms as identified for purposes of this study.

### Definitions

**Farm:** A tract of three acres or more occupied by a household and on which the operator carried on some agricultural operations either for home use or for sale.

**Part-Time Farm:** A farm on which the operator worked at other employment 100 days or more during the previous year; providing his labor and management on the farm were not replaced by someone working under a wage or rental contract.

**Subclasses of Part-Time Farms:** For purposes of this study, part-time farms were divided into four subclasses.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup>The 1950 U. S. Census defined part-time farms as follows: "Farms with a value of sales of farm products of \$250 to \$1199 were classified as part-time provided the farm operator reported (1) 100 or more days of work off the farm in 1949, or (2) the nonfarm income received by him or members of his family was greater than the value of the farm products sold." (1950 U. S. Census of Agriculture, V. 1—pt. 3, p. xii.) In the present study no upper limit was placed on sales.

<sup>3</sup>Although not identified as part-time farmers, the census provides information on "the extent that farm operators performed off-farm work and their dependence on other income.

<sup>4</sup>These classes represent a progression by amount of farming done from least to greatest, and are in reverse order from the census classification of commercial farms.

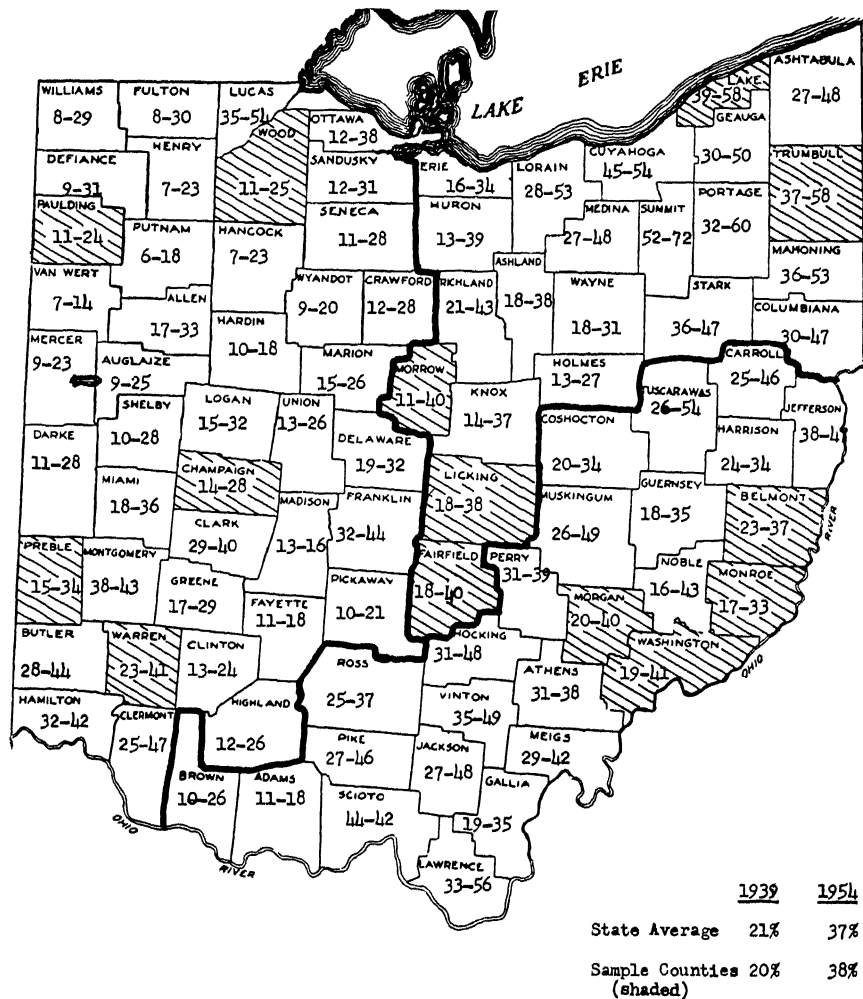
- I. **Residential**—Part-time farms, places of three acres or more, with a total value of agricultural production of less than \$250. (This sub-class conforms closely to the 1950 Census definition of residential farms.)
- II. **Subsistence**—Part-time farms with a total farm production in excess of \$250, primarily for home use and with farm sales amounting to less than \$250.
- III. **Semi-Commercial**—Part-time farms where production for subsistence is fairly important but with sales of farm products amounting to \$250 up to \$1199. (The semi-commercial part-time farms approximate the group classed as part-time farms by the census.)
- IV. **Commercial**—Part-time farms with sales of farm products amounting to \$1200 or more.

The primary purpose of the above subclassification is to identify and study the characteristics of a cross-section of farm families who are mixing varying degrees of farming with a substantial amount of non-farm employment. They are all called part-time farmers. At one end of the scale some of these differ little from open country residents who use no land for agricultural purposes. At the other end of the scale some are operating as much land as many full-time farmers.

#### **Proportion of Farm Operators Reporting 100 or More Days Off-Farm Work**

For the state as a whole 21 percent of all farm operators reported doing 100 or more days of off-farm work in 1939 (Census of 1940). In 1954 this proportion was 37 percent (Census of 1954).

Figure 1 shows how this increase in off-farm work was distributed among the counties and generalized type of farming areas. The north-east dairy area contains the heaviest concentration of industry. In this area the proportion of farm operators spending 100 days or more in off-farm employment increased from 26 percent in 1939 to 51 percent in 1954. In the southeastern unglaciated hill area, characterized as a general farming area, the proportions were 25 percent in 1939 and 41 percent in 1954. In the corn belt area, Western Ohio, the proportions were 15 percent in 1939 and 30 percent in 1954. This area contains a heavy concentration of industry extending from Columbus to Cincinnati with less concentration in the northwestern quarter of the state which also contains the largest proportion of arable land. It is significant that in this latter area the rate of increase in farm operators spending 100 days or more in off-farm employment was equal to that in



\* First figure in each county is percent in 1939; second is percent in 1954.

Figure 1. Proportion of farm operators reporting 100 or more days work off the farm, 1939 and 1954\*.

Northeastern Ohio. On the other hand, the proportion of farm operators in Northwestern Counties engaging in off-farm work remains the lowest in the state.

The frequency of part-time farming and its recent increase is influenced more by access to employment than it is by the type of farming and by quality of the land. The increase in off-farm work is a rough measure of industrial expansion which has brought most Ohio farms within commuting distance of some type of employment opportunity.

To get a more detailed picture of part-time farming, a field study was made in 83 square mile areas of land scattered through 14 counties—identified in Figure 1 by cross-hatching. The square mile areas, averaging nearly six in each county, were situated at equal intervals from the county seat town diagonally to the county line. This pattern was followed to determine what influence distance to population centers

**TABLE 1.—A Classification of Open Country Households in 83 Square Mile Areas Listed by Distance to County Seat, Ohio, 1954**

Item	Road Distance to County Seat Town					Total
	0-4 miles	5-9 miles	10-14 miles	15-19 miles	20 miles or more	
Number of square miles in sample	18	25	22	14	4	83
Classification of households resident in the area:						
Full-Time Farm, #	64	88	73	49	15	289
Part-Time Farm, "	67	73	53	45	15	253
Residence, "	98	63	66	57	57	341
Total "	229	224	192	151	87	881
Average number per square mile	12.7	9.0	8.7	10.8	21.8	10.6
Proportion of household in each class:						
Full-Time Farm, %	28	39	38	32	17	32
Part-Time Farm, "	29	33	28	30	17	29
Residence, "	43	28	34	38	66	39
Average size of tract:						
Full-Time Farm, acres	112	103	117	106	160	115
Part-Time Farm, "	59	72	65	68	59	67
Residence, "	7	6	7	12	4	7

and road type might have on the incidence of part-time farming. To complete the picture in respect to land use, all households resident in each square mile block were classed as full-time farmers, part-time farmers and rural residents.

In Table 1, three points are of specific importance. First, at least up to 15 miles from the county seat, the average number of households per square mile declined slightly and from that point on increased because of the influence of other centers of population. Second, the proportion of farm households classed as part-time and full-time farmers was relatively constant regardless of distance from the county seat. Third, although these square mile areas were all open country, more households were classed as rural residents than were classed as either part-time or full-time farmers. These rural residents often had control over enough acreage to be classed as farmers but the land was being used by someone else or was idle. Neither distance to the county seat nor type of road was of much significance in respect to the class of part-time farm.

The findings in these square miles illustrate that an important share of open country residents depend partially or entirely on nonfarm sources of income.

### **Distribution of Sample**

The main objective of the field study was to obtain a sufficient sample of cases to identify various circumstances descriptive of the different subclasses of part-time farmers in various areas of the state. In the counties selected for sampling the proportion of farm operators engaged in off-farm work was nearly the same as in the state as a whole.<sup>5</sup>

### **Use of Land in 83 Square Mile Areas**

Of the total land in these square mile areas, about 87 percent was in farms: 57 percent in full-time, 29 percent in part-time farms. Another 4 percent of the land area was in tracts classed as rural residences. Of the remaining area—amounting to 9 percent of the

---

<sup>5</sup>These counties in 1949, according to the census, contained 17 percent of all farms, and 17.3 percent of all farm operators reporting 100 or more days of off-farm work. The 1954 Census reported, 37 percent of farm operators in Ohio spent 100 days or more in off-farm work; in the 14 counties, 38 percent. In the three generalized types of farming areas the proportions were: N. E., all counties, 51 percent, sample counties, 52 percent; S. E., all counties, 41 percent, sample counties, 38 percent; W., all counties, 30 percent, sample counties, 30 percent.



total—the land either was lying idle or associated with some non-agricultural use such as a rural business site, recreational area, mineral land, or real estate subdivisions.<sup>6</sup>

Provided the sample area is fairly typical, the above figures imply that about one-third of Ohio's farm land area is operated by families where the head of the household is occupied to a substantial extent in some other employment.

#### Part-Time Farms Grouped by Extent of Farming

Of the 251 households classed as part-time farmers in the 83 square mile areas, 242 households completed questionnaires and two others gave partial information. The interview provided information on the farming activities conducted by the family, the off-farm work and related data.

Of the entire sample nearly half (47 percent) were classed as commercial part-time farms (Class IV), i.e., operators work away from home 100 days or more and sell \$1200 or more of farm products. (Sales from Class IV farms in 1953 averaged more than \$3000.)

<sup>6</sup>The square mile areas used in the survey were more typical of open country situations and had a higher proportion of the land in farms than the total area of the sample counties. Within these counties, according to the 1954 Census, 77.8 percent of the total land area was in farms—about the same as the entire state, 76.2 percent.

**TABLE 2.—Number and Proportion of Part-Time Farms, by Class, and Type of Farming Area, 83 Sample Square Miles, Ohio, 1954**

Area	Class of Part-Time Farm				Total
	I (residential)	II (subsistence)	III (semi-commercial)	IV (commercial)	
Northeastern	16	4	17	30	67
Southeastern	11	16	33	37	97
Western	9	4	17	48	78
Total	36	24	67	115	242
	Percent				
Northeastern	24	6	25	45	100
Southeastern	11	17	34	38	100
Western	12	5	22	61	100
Total	15	10	28	47	100

Second in frequency of occurrence was (Class III). Classes III and IV represented three-fourths of the entire sample. Over half the remainder were classed as residential, although in S. E. Ohio the subsistence class was the more important of the two. The cash farm income of both these latter groups was very small although the farm products devoted to home use were of considerable importance in family living.

#### Amount of Land Operated

Average acreage operated by these groups of part-time farmers, I to IV, was 23, 35, 50 and 102 acres, respectively. These total acreages are not as significant as the acreage used to grow crops. Class I averaged only .9 acre in crops, about 4 percent of their land. Many cultivated no more than a home garden. Class II with four acres in crops, cultivated about one-tenth of their land; Class III with 13 acres in crops, cultivated about a fourth of their land; Class IV with 47 acres in crops cultivated nearly half (46 percent) of their land. (In comparison 49 percent of all land in farms in Ohio was in harvested crop land in 1949, an average of 52 acres per farm.)

The fact that the residential and subsistence part-time farmers harvested crops from a smaller proportion of their total land holding was more a reflection of quality of land held than choice of utilization. Frequently the unharvested portion was land ill suited to agricultural use because of topography, drainage, or soil condition.

**TABLE 3.—Average Acreage Operated by 242 Part-Time Farmers, by Area of State and Class of Part-Time Farm, 14 Ohio Counties, 1953**

Area	Mean Acreage in Farms					Range in acreage*	Mean crop acres
	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	All classes		
Northeastern	29	23	34	95	59	2-236	20
Southeastern	23	45	75	130	86	3-360	23
Western	11	6	21	84	58	2-480	37
All areas	23	35	50	102	69	----	--
Range in acreage*	2-185	4-156	5-360	2-480	--	2-480	--
Mean crop acres	.9	4.1	13.4	47.4	--	----	26.8

\*A few operating units of less than 3 acres were considered farms when the ownership unit was 3 acres or more and the operator used his share of crops from land rented out to feed livestock kept on the operating unit of less than 3 acres.

The amount of land occupied had a very indefinite relationship to farm sales. As indicated in Table 3, size of farm ranged up to well above 100 acres in individual cases in all four economic classes of part-time farms.

## II. PART-TIME FARMERS—WHO AND WHY?

### Why do People Engage in Part-Time Farming?

A total of 244 families responded to the question, "Why did you start to farm part-time?" Usually, more than one reason was given, 612 in all. These have been paraphrased into a dozen or more statements listed in Table 4. The exact words used by the respondents would further emphasize the many things leading to the decision to farm part-time.

**TABLE 4.—Stated Reasons for Engaging in Part-Time Farming, in Order of Frequency, 244 Part-Time Farmers, Ohio, 1953**

Reason stated	Rank of reason	Number of respondents stating reason	Percent of respondents stating reason	Percent of total reasons given
Like the country	1	118	48.0	19.3
Get started in farming	2	91	37.0	14.9
Increase earnings	3	68	27.6	11.1
Children	4	52	21.5	8.5
Retirement plans	5	43	17.5	7.0
Lower living costs	6	39	15.9	6.4
Relatives	7	31	12.6	5.1
Inherited property	8	28	11.4	4.6
Unemployment	9	27	11.0	4.4
Housing	10	25	10.2	4.1
Health	11	18	7.3	2.9
Like nonfarm work	12	16	6.5	2.6
Other*	--	56	23.7	9.1

\*Real estate development project, 7; freedom and independence, 6; pay off debts, 6; to permit boys to take over farm, 6; place for parents, 4; rural business reasons, 4; medical bills, 4; livestock disease, 3; farm improvements, 3; timber operations, 3; supplemental income during labor strikes, 3; security, 2; investment, 2; prestige of nonfarm job, 1; security of tenure and location, 1; spare time in slack season, 1.

It is significant that “Like the country” came first—a reason associated with living rather than making a living. “Get started in farming”, the second most frequent reason, was primarily an expression of intentions to farm full-time either as soon as practicable or after retirement.



A wide variety of jobs occupy the part-time farmer when he is augmenting the farm income by taking employment off the farm. This man operated a filling station and did his farm work as much as possible during the evening hours.

The remaining reasons given in Table 4 are a mixture of economic, and social or personal motives which lead people to farm part-time. The emphasis people gave to particular reasons depended somewhat on whether they were former full-time farmers or urban residents moving to the country. For instance "like nonfarm work" was an answer given by some who had been full-time farmers; "lower living costs" was a more frequent answer by former urban residents.

### **How Long as Part-Time Farmers?**

Some of the operators interviewed had been operating as part-time farmers for many years, one for half a century. Others had completed only one year in the farm-nonfarm work combination. The average (mean) years of operation as part-time farmers for the 242 cases was 11 years; eight years was the median amount of time.

Some operators had previously been only rural residents, doing no farming before beginning some farming activities. Other operators had previously been full-time farmers who had added a nonfarm job to their farm operations.

Operators in the eastern areas had been part-time farmers for a longer period of time, on the average, than those in the western area. Operators on the semi-commercial (Class III) farms had been part-time farmers for a longer time than other classes. About one-fourth of the Class III farms had been operated as a full-time farm by the previous operator, compared to over half of the farms in Class IV.

### **The Move from Full-Time to Part-Time Farming**

Of 242 cases where adequate information was obtained, 49 (20%) had previously operated as full-time farmers from their present residence; some with only their present acreage. These had farmed full-time an average of eight years. Usually they were operating relatively large acreages (as compared with most part-time farmers) but had taken nonfarm work for various reasons. About half these part-time farmers live in southeastern Ohio.

Ten of the 49 were young men who had farmed full-time (no other occupation) while receiving subsistence payments and taking the Veterans on-the-farm training for an average period of about three years. These still had full-time farming as their goal but had taken outside work to get better established. Eleven more of the 49 viewed nonfarm employment as a better opportunity than their farm income expectations alone. In some instances this view was related to the size of their farms and the inability to buy or rent additional land.

In seven cases a father took nonfarm employment because growing sons could take over more of the farm work. In two cases outside employment was taken, at least temporarily, when disease forced liquidation of the major livestock enterprise. Other reasons and the number giving them were: health—inability to stand full-time farm work, 5; preference for nonfarm work, 4; estate settlement increased debt or left too small a unit, 3; farmed full-time during depression but took job when available, 3; purchased farm, was tenant here, 3; expense of growing family, 1.

The above illustrates that various things cause the shift from full to part-time farming, the need for more income being the most frequent motivation.



**Play space for the children, and a place for pets were reasons some folks wanted a home or small farm in the country.**

## Future Plans of Part-Time Farmers

The reasons people gave for engaging in part-time farming do not necessarily describe their future intentions. Relationship between future plans and the acreage operated are illustrated by the following figures:

	Number	Percent of cases	Average acres operated
Plan to:			
Continue part-time farming	93	38.1	60
Farm full-time	69	28.3	100
Retire and farm	30	12.3	67
Quit farming, live here	39	16.0	27
Move to town or other residence	13	5.3	78

Some of those intending to farm full-time had made substantial progress in building up the size of farm business but only a small minority had achieved a farm income which would satisfactorily replace the nonfarm earnings.<sup>7</sup>

As a whole, the future plans of part-time farmers contacted in this study indicate that nearly all plan to continue living in the country. Most plan to continue farming on some scale.

### Some Background Characteristics of Part-Time Farm Families

In respect to background, four factors were singled out to help describe part-time farm families: (1) where husband and wife were reared—farm or nonfarm background; (2) the level of formal education achieved by husband and wife; (3) age; and (4) size of family. It was presumed that these factors have some bearing on the nature of peoples' nonfarm employment, on the size of their farming operations and on their earnings.

### Majority have a farm background

Three-fourths of the operators and nearly two-thirds of the wives were farm reared. Both husband and wife were farm reared in 52 percent of the cases while in only 15 percent of the cases were both nonfarm (Table 5). The above proportions varied somewhat with different areas.

---

<sup>7</sup>See: The Part-Time Route to Full-Time Farming; H. R. Moore and W. A. Wayt, Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station 1957, Bulletin No. 793.

**TABLE 5.—Place of Rearing of Farm Operators and Their Wives,\*  
242 Part-Time Farms, 14 Ohio Counties, 1953**

Area	Operator		Wife		Both farm	Both nonfarm	Total cases
	Farm†	Nonfarm‡	Farm	Nonfarm			
Northeast	46	21	39	26	31	13	65
Southeast	80	17	63	31	55	9	94
Western	56	22	46	32	38	14	78
Total	182	60	148	89	124	36	237
Percent	75	25	62	38	52	15	100

\*A total of 237 wives, some operators were unmarried or widowers.

†Farm includes part-time farms.

‡Nonfarm includes four operators and eleven wives reared in rural areas but not on full or part-time farms. In 53 cases the husband was farm reared, the wife, nonfarm reared. In 24 cases the husband was nonfarm reared, the wife, farm reared.

Those with a farm background were more frequently associated with a larger farm and farm business. Eighty percent of the commercial and semi-commercial part-time farm operators were farm reared as contrasted with 63 percent of operators on the subsistence and residential part-time farms.

### Education

Formal education of both husbands and wives ranged from about sixth grade up to four or more years in college. This study indicated that part-time farming is not specifically associated with any one level of educational attainment.

Farm reared operators averaged 10 years of school compared with 11.3 years for those with a nonfarm background. Years schooling was also less for farm reared men than for farm reared women—35 percent of the former completed high school or more compared with 58 percent of the latter.

The level of educational achievement averaged about one year more for the residential and commercial part-time farms (classes I and IV) than for the subsistence and semi-commercial (classes II and III).

Years of schooling had some relationship to farm and nonfarm earnings although it is not clear how much cause and effect relationship may exist. Operators with less than an 8th grade education had the lowest level of farm receipts. No significant difference in farm receipts was indicated for operators with 8th grade schooling and above. On the other hand, average nonfarm earnings increased rather consistently with the amount of schooling. (Table 6).



**TABLE 6.—Average Gross Farm and Nonfarm Income per Farm Operator, Classified by Years of Formal Education  
235 Part-Time Farms, Ohio, 1953**

Years in school	Gross farm receipts	Nonfarm earnings	Total	Total as percent of average
Less than 8	\$ 926	\$3597	\$4523	78.1
Completed 8	1826	3794	5620	96.1
9 to 11	1816	3816	5632	97.3
Completed 12	1983	4026	6009	103.8
Over 12	1864	5261	7125	123.0
Average	\$1818	\$3973	\$5791	100.0

### Age of Operator and Size of Household

It was presumed that either one or both of these items might be related to the size of farming operations or to other circumstances which typify part-time farmers. Because some relationship exists between age of operator and size of household, the two are considered together in Table 7.

**TABLE 7.—Household Composition of 242 Part-Time Farm Families by Age of Operator, 14 Ohio Counties, 1953**

Age of operator	No. of cases	Single* operator	Couple only	Operators reporting number of children at home					Average size family	Other household members†		Total household members	Persons per household
				1	2	3	4	5-more		No. reporting	No. reported		
25-34	30	1	4	2	7	9	5	2	4.3	6	9	145	4.8
35-44	69	3	12	10	13	16	8	7	4.2	14	21	318	4.6
45-54	77	0	23	16	20	10	5	3	3.6	10	14	292	3.8
55-64	48	1	26	10	4	6	1	0	2.8	5	13	148	3.0
65-75	18	0	12	5	0	0	1	0	2.8	4	11	56	3.1
Total	242	5	77	43	44	41	20	12	3.7	39	68	959	4.0

\*Single, divorced, or widower.

†Parent, grandchildren, brother, or other relatives.

Of the total group of 242 operators in the sample, the average age was 48 years, slightly younger than the average of all Ohio farm operators (50.6 years in 1954; 49.9 years in 1950, as determined by the census). Operators of residential and subsistence part-time farms averaged about two years younger than the total group. In view of the limited numbers in the sample this age difference is not significant.

The time spent in gainful employment and earnings averaged highest for those families where the family head was in the age bracket of 45 to 54 years (Table 8 and 9). A principal factor related to time spent in gainful employment was that the younger families had more children in the age of dependency. A little later in the family cycle both wife and children might be gainfully employed more extensively on the farm or elsewhere thereby increasing total household earnings. The younger operators, those in the 25 to 34 age bracket, averaged the most hours at farm work. Other family members did more farm work later in the family cycle.



**Sales of livestock and livestock products accounted for about 70 percent of gross sales on the Part-Time farms studied. Frequently the wife or children helped out with the chore work.**

Making some allowance for random variation in the sample, the evidence indicates that the peak of family earnings reached in the 45 to 54 age bracket is about a fifth higher than for families 20 years younger and a fourth higher than for families 20 years older.

**TABLE 8.—Average Hours of Family Labor Resource Utilized, Farm and Nonfarm, by 242 Part-Time Farm Families Classified by Age of Operator, 14 Ohio Counties, 1953**

Labor utilized	Age of Operator (Family Head) in Years					Average all
	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	
Operator						
Farm	867	812	813	834	807	823
Nonfarm	1,879	1,938	1,939	1,899	1,659	1,905
Total	2,746	2,750	2,752	2,733	2,466	2,728
Other family members						
Farm	206	225	400	297	215	292
Nonfarm	111	172	292	363	306	248
Total	317	397	692	660	521	540
Total family						
Farm	1,073	1,037	1,213	1,131	1,022	1,115
Nonfarm	1,990	2,110	2,231	2,262	1,965	2,153
Total	3,063	3,147	3,444	3,393	2,987	3,268
Total Utilization as Percent of Average Hours Utilized						
Operator						
Farm	105.3	98.8	98.8	101.3	98.1	100.0
Nonfarm	98.6	101.7	101.8	99.7	87.1	100.0
Total	100.7	100.8	100.9	100.2	90.4	100.0
Other family members						
Farm	70.5	77.1	137.0	101.7	73.6	100.0
Nonfarm	44.8	69.4	117.7	146.4	123.4	100.0
Total	58.7	73.5	128.1	122.2	96.5	100.0
Total family labor						
Farm	96.2	93.0	108.0	101.4	91.7	100.0
Nonfarm	92.4	98.0	103.6	105.1	91.3	100.0
Total	93.7	96.3	105.4	103.9	91.4	100.0

Both gross farm receipts and nonfarm earnings varied in about equal degree with the different age groups as described above. There was no well defined tendency for any one age group to give more emphasis to farming, and less emphasis to nonfarm employment or vice versa.

**TABLE 9.—Average Gross Family\* Income of 242 Part-Time Farms as Related to Age of Operator, 14 Ohio Counties, 1953**

Income source	Age of Operator					Average all
	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	
Northeast						
Farm	\$2,021	\$1,122	\$2,084	\$1,830	\$1,562	\$1,662
Nonfarm†	4,357	4,870	5,419	4,350	5,000	4,923
Total	\$6,378	\$5,992	\$7,503	\$6,180	\$6,562	\$6,585
Southeast						
Farm	\$1,363	\$1,524	\$1,721	\$1,182	\$1,108	\$1,466
Nonfarm	3,500	3,961	4,144	3,755	3,125	3,896
Total	\$4,863	\$5,485	\$5,865	\$4,937	\$4,233	\$5,362
Western						
Farm	\$1,987	\$2,388	\$2,343	\$2,792	\$1,578	\$2,291
Nonfarm	3,733	4,313	5,104	5,533	2,425	4,496
Total	\$5,720	\$6,801	\$7,442	\$8,331	\$4,002	\$6,787
Total cases						
Farm	\$1,814	\$1,578	\$2,022	\$1,834	\$1,468	\$1,786
Nonfarm	3,806	4,341	4,804	4,449	3,439	4,374
Total	\$5,620	\$5,919	\$6,826	\$6,283	\$4,970	\$6,160

\*Family income here includes gross cash farm sales plus nonfarm income from paid employment whether to operator or other members of the farm family.

† Nonfarm income per family † is total gross nonfarm income divided by number of families. Since the 242 farms reported 275 employed persons (average 1.14 per farm) Average nonfarm income per employed worker was \$3,850

### III. THE FARM HOME, CONVENIENCES, AND FAMILY PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

The outstanding reason given for being part-time farmers was an expression of the desire for country living. This expression covered a wide range of amenities of life in a rural setting. Some are related

more closely to the house, living space, and privacy of a country home; others could be more properly attributed to social relationships, both formal and informal, different from those of an urban society.<sup>8</sup>

### The Physical Environment of the Home

Since part-time farming appears to be a mode of living as well as a source of family income, data showing the general condition of the homes lived in and the major conveniences reflect the family's level of living.

Practically all houses in this study were of frame construction. There was no apparent difference between the different classes of part-time farms as to the age or type of construction of the house. The average age of the houses of known age was approximately 50 years.

Many were houses originally constructed, along with other buildings, as the dwellings and seat of operations of full-time farmers. In some cases the barns and other buildings had been removed or had fallen into disrepair since they were no longer needed to service the farmed area. Some new houses, built within the past ten years, sheltered families on part-time farms or served primarily as rural residences.

That relatively few families planned to move to town or another residence would indicate a high degree of general satisfaction with their living accommodations and rural location.

Dwellings and barns located on part-time farms were classified as being in a "good", "fair", "poor" or "very poor" state. The percentage distributions for these characteristics are shown in Table 10.

Based on the relationship of tax valuations to market prices, it was estimated that the dwelling on the average part-time farm had a value of approximately \$4600. One-tenth of this amount (\$460) was assumed to be the annual rental value of the dwelling; \$38, the monthly rental value. Both tax valuations and personal observations indicated about the same quality of dwellings on the different classes of part-time farms.

The average dwelling in this sample would rent for considerably more than \$38 per month if in an urban location, and its market value, or cost to a purchaser would also be relatively higher, perhaps double or triple the \$4600 valuation.

---

<sup>8</sup>For more detail on this point see: **Part-Time Farming—Its Influence on Young Families**; Christine H. Hillman, Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station Research Bulletin 775, May 1956.

**TABLE 10.—Selected Housing and Farm Characteristics, 240 Part-Time Farms, by Class of Farm, 14 Ohio Counties, 1953**

Characteristic (Number of families)	Economic Class of Farm				
	I 35	II 24	III 66	IV 115	All classes 240
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Condition of house:					
Good	44	21	45	40	40
Fair	46	54	40	50	46
Poor	6	21	15	10	12
Very poor	3	4	0	0	2
Condition of barn:					
Good	16	17	14	27	21
Fair	23	13	29	42	33
Poor	27	46	32	28	31
Very poor	6	25	16	1	8
Percent no barn	27	0	8	2	7
Home conveniences:					
Electricity	100	100	100	100	100
Radio	100	100	100	100	100
Refrigerator	100	100	98	100	99
Water under pressure	80	54	80	79	76
Television	74	51	77	76	74
Kitchen modernized	74	59	68	60	68
Bathroom	69	45	55	64	60
Central heating	69	38	54	53	54
Deep freeze or locker	50	54	57	60	54
Source of water supply:					
Well	71	67	75	66	69
Cistern	3	8	3	2	3
Spring	20	8	5	6	8
Combination	6	17	17	26	20

The additional travel expense associated with living in an open country location would tend to lower both the market price and the rent which could be obtained for the dwelling as a place to live.

Another assumption is that the value of tracts of rural real estate adapted to the needs of part-time farmers is in part supported by the nonfarm income of actual or potential occupants. This influence on the market price of farm real estate will tend to grow with the increased ease of highway transportation and access to employment opportunities.

While there were wide variations from farm to farm, this study indicated no consistent difference in quality of dwellings on different sized part-time farms. Therefore, the rental value of the dwelling was considered a constant sum in computing the costs and returns from different sized part-time farms. These data are shown in a later section.

### **Home Conveniences**

While the possession of certain household conveniences may indicate rather closely a family's general level of living, it is impossible to measure accurately the sum of material and non-material things that make up any family's standard of living. The selection of certain consumptive items as a norm depends upon two factors: the items must be easy to measure, and they must have a certain universal appeal to all families.

Home conveniences such as electricity, a radio or television, running water, electric refrigeration and central heating are good examples of items which fulfill the requirements of part-time farm families. Table 10 shows the order of frequency with which they appeared in the homes of families included in this study.

It will be observed that more families on Class I farms had modern kitchens, bathrooms, central heating systems and water under pressure than did families on the other three classes of farms. Families on Class II farms lived in houses having the least number of these items.

When asked to indicate improvements planned for some future date, homemakers cited the installation of water under pressure and the building of bathrooms where these conveniences were not already present. The availability of good water supply influenced these replies. For the most part, families relied upon a well as their source of water supply.

The utilities and furnishings in homes visited indicate that part-time farm families exposed to urban influences, urban facilities, and urban services demand the conveniences of urban living.

The general appearance of the farmsteads of part-time farmers was not distinctly different from those of full-time farmers in the area. Some part-time farmers obviously do not have the time to spend on maintenance jobs and in improving the attractiveness of the home. The generally higher level of incomes resulting from the nonfarm employment enable part-time farmers to make building improvements and purchase household conveniences more readily than many of their neighbors who farm full-time.

## Family Participation in Community Affairs

Voluntary formal organizations and special interest groups occupy an important place in maintaining a stable and responsible rural society. Although a specific group may serve only an educational, social, recreational or religious function all may combine to act as a catalyst contributing to the community's and people's vitality and strength.

The family holds the key to such group relationships. All families in a community will not be members or take an active part in all organizations nor should they be expected to do so. There will always be selectivity in membership and participation. All families need to feel they belong and take pride in the community. It is important that organizations be representative of a total community, reaching members from all social and economic strata. Without this representation there is danger that non-participants may be the persons in greatest need of participation.



**If a part-time farmer wants to use a lot of labor saving power and equipment, he needs to operate on a large enough scale to justify the equipment or his costs per unit sold may be higher than the prices he receives.**



**TABLE 11.—Number and Percent of Families Identified by Economic Class of Farm and Indicating Affiliation with Specific Community Organizations, 238 Part-Time Farm Families, 1953**

Organization	Number and Percent of Cases by Economic Class of Farm									
	I		II		III		IV		Total	
	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>100</b>
Church	17	53	15	62	40	62	83	70	155	65
Farm bureau	1	3	2	8	7	11	40	36	50	21
Grange	3	9	5	21	14	21	33	28	55	23
Labor group	12	38	5	21	12	19	20	17	49	21
P T A	1	3	3	12	7	11	12	10	23	10
Civic group							2	4	2	1
Commodity group							5	4	5	2
Other*	19	59	6	25	22	34	42	35	89	37

\*Other includes fraternal organizations, veterans organizations, women's clubs, Blue Star Mothers, Sportsman Clubs

Although this section explored only a limited segment of the organizational affiliations and participation patterns of families engaged in part-time farming, it appeared that many rural organizations presently have the support of a comparatively small percent of these families (Table 11). Why is this so?

Frequently stated as the reason for inactivity in community organizations was lack of time. To carry on farming operations and chores after an 8 hour work shift was taking nearly all free time of the husband. Work on the farm and in the home or a nonfarm job was said to cut into the free time of the wife. Most stated that they could not belong to formally organized groups, attend meetings and still get the necessary work done.

The analysis of data suggests, however, that lack of time is not the only factor influencing participation.

A total of 238 schedules were analyzed relative to this portion of the study. A few families held memberships in two or more organized groups (8 percent). With the exception of the church, however, two-thirds of the families did not belong to or attend meetings of any organization active in the community wherein they resided. Indications were that even those stating an affiliation with specific organizations assumed little leadership in such organizations.

Information secured indicated that neither nonfarm employment nor class of farm was entirely responsible for lack of participation or interest. Relatively few families, regardless of farm class, reported membership in a greater number of organizations prior to engaging in part-time farming. Only 22 percent of those who had formerly farmed full-time reported membership in two or more organizations during that time. Stated as reasons were: (1) lack of knowledge relative to the objectives of specific organizations, (2) disinterest in group activity, (3) programs were not helpful, (4) costs in connection with membership, and (5) unawareness that such groups existed.

Location of meeting places and the participation of individual families are related. A majority of respondents (59 percent) stated that they were willing to travel no more than 5 miles to meetings. Indications were that program content and appeal of the meeting influenced this reply. If, it appeared, that the meeting offered enough to justify further travel and there was evidence of personal and family gain, distance was not a matter of concern. Proportionately more active respondents lived, however, within 5 miles of meetings than did the inactive respondents.

Also, there was a positive relationship between amount of formal schooling attained and participation in organizations. As the educational level rose the number of memberships and evidence of leadership increased. A high relationship between education and formal participation in community group activity has been a consistent finding in similar studies.

The length of time during which families had been residents of a particular community influenced participation in active groups identified with that community. Place of rearing did not significantly influence membership or participation in such groups. Those who had always lived on farms, however, were more familiar with the names of formally organized farm groups, their function and services than were those of nonfarm backgrounds.

Husbands were more apt to have made an initial contact than were wives. In most cases this appeared to be the result of the organization's membership policy. Timidity or hesitancy to seek a contact seemed to be more typical of wives included in this study. The fact that family members had not been personally contacted by group representatives was an important factor in non-participation or interest. Families reporting a longer term of residence in a specific community were therefore, more apt to be members of organizations active in a community.

Children in the home did not necessarily limit the time spent in organizational activity. For example, those families with children of school age had an average of 2.0 memberships; those with no children or children beyond school age averaged only 2.3 memberships per family.

Programs of meetings seemed important here. If families felt that program content would help them as parents they could find a way to attend meetings and to participate.

Although the analysis has been made primarily in terms of the adult participation in the community affairs, numerous references made in the course of the interviews indicated that the children of part-time farmers participate in the organized youth activities. Sons and daughters of part-time farmers participate in the 4-H Club program. In numerous cases the sons were also active in the Future Farmers of America in conjunction with their Vocational Agricultural school training. Several part-time farm operators and their wives indicated that their own pleasant memories of such associations, and their desires for similar experiences for their children, was a factor in the decision to live in the country.

The rural community needs the support of all who desire to live there. Organizations in rural communities depend upon the support from part-time farmers as well as those considered full-time farmers. Certainly the values, attitudes and activities of those engaged in part-time farming will affect, and in turn, be affected by the rural community.

Families engaged in part-time farming were aware of their needs for greater association with others in the rural community. They were not unmindful of the fact that they had little participation in such groups. Hesitancy to take the initiative in seeking out groups, to attend meetings without personal invitation or the feeling of not farming on a scale comparable to neighbors was frequently stated as reasons for non-participation. Those interested in promoting improved rural community living should direct an increased number of programs aimed at the interests of the part-time farmer.

## IV. THE NONFARM JOB

### Kind of Employment and Time Required

Most farm operators who do other work, to the extent of 100 days or more annually, are obligated to give a fixed amount of time to the outside job. Their farm work must be done with remaining time and energy plus available family labor. Regardless of intentions, it may be difficult to adjust matters so the farm is the major enterprise, the other job secondary.

Part-time farmers engage in practically all types of nonfarm employment. About three-fourths were classed as wage or salary workers, the other fourth as self-employed or as independent contractors. Industrial employment accounted for about half of the nonfarm jobs engaged in by those interviewed. The other half, in order of frequency, were engaged in transportation, selling, construction, mining, wood working industries, teaching, home industries and miscellaneous. These general types of nonfarm jobs are broken down in more detail in Table 12.

Most regular nonfarm jobs demand 40 to 45 hours per week of the employee, or 2000 hours or more per year. In practice there are exceptions because of various reasons. Within most classes of employment total time worked per year ranged from about 1200 to 2400 hours. Within the industrial group, those working less than 2000 hours (or less than 250 days a year) usually worked a full week but for less than 50-52 weeks a year.

This situation was also common for construction and building trades workers. The variation in employment of miners was more likely to result from variation in days worked per week throughout the year. Truck and bus operators' work period might include variations of each type. A local milk route driver might work three or four hours per day every day in the year. Another might work irregularly as a substitute. At least a majority of the part-time farmers contacted were committed to deliver 40 hours or more of labor per week to some employer and therefore had to manage their farm work to allow for these requirements.

### Years of Work at Present Nonfarm Job

This ranged from less than a year up to 41 years. Nearly a third had worked at the present job less than five years. The average (median) time on the present job for all operators was eight years.

**TABLE 12.—Nonfarm Employment of 242 Part-Time Farm Operators 14 Ohio Counties 1953**

Type of nonfarm employment	Number reporting	Average number days worked annually	Range of hours worked annually
Industrial employment (total)	118	253	1,200–2,800
Office work	11	264	1,200–2,200
Skilled work	31	273	1,320–2,400
Semi-skilled	47	252	1,200–2,800
Unskilled	29	254	1,200–2,400
Transportation (total)	31	247	900–2,800
Road or RR construction and maintenance	14	255	1,280–2,400
Truck or bus operators	17	240	900–2,800
Sales and storekeepers (total)	25	251	900–2,800
Salesmen	13	209	900–2,400
Storekeepers	12	290	2,400–2,800
Construction and building trades (total)	24	230	1,000–2,400
Carpenter or mason	8	192	1,000–2,200
Contractor or builder	5	266	2,000–2,400
Electrician	5	270	1,600–2,400
Painter or plasterer	3	233	1,800–2,000
Plumber or roofer	3	216	1,200–2,400
Mining and minerals (total)	13	216	1,040–2,400
Coal miner	6	206	1,440–1,840
Oil and gas	5	194	1,040–2,000
Stone or gravel	2	300	2,000–2,400
Timber and sawmill (total)	4	208	1,500–2,000
Teacher	4	208	1,400–2,200
Home industry*	9	217	900–2,600
Miscellaneous†	14	245	800–2,800
Total	242	248	800–2,800

\*Home auto or farm equipment repair shop, rug maker, broom maker, cabinet shop, slaughter house, barber, etc.

†Prod. credit field man, A.S.C. office manager, landscape gardener, public official, prison guard, chiropodist, and miscellaneous odd jobs.

The length of time spent on the present nonfarm job was about the same for all four classes of part-time farm operators. There was some difference by areas—part-time farmers in the more heavily industrialized northeastern and southwestern quarters of the state averaged more years on the present job than those in the southeastern and northwestern quarters. This may be a reflection of the relative availability of employment opportunities.

Nearly half (48%) of the operators reported working at the present job for a longer period than they had lived on the present farm. Over 40 percent reported working at the present job for a longer period than they had farmed part-time. Only about 10 percent reported the same period of time spent on the present farm, present job, and in part-time farming.

#### Distance to Work and Travel Time

A few part-time farmers work “just across the road” from the farm. Most travel from 5 to 20 miles, one way, to a regular place of employment. Some travel much greater distance—occasionally more than 50 miles. Others have indefinite travel schedules. All these circumstances were encountered in this study. Out of the sample of 242 part-time operators interviewed, 222 had a definite site of employment and stated both the miles and minutes involved in traveling to the job. The average distance was about 13 miles; the average time, about 30 minutes.

**TABLE 13.—Distance and Travel Time One Way to Nonfarm Employment by 222 Part-Time Farmers in 14 Ohio Counties, 1953**

Minutes travel time	Miles Traveled One Way										Total cases	
	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50		51-55
100-109										1		1
90- 99								1			1	2
80- 89												
70- 79						3	3	1				7
60- 69			1	1	2	8	3	1				16
50- 59			2		2	3	1					8
40- 49		1	4	12	11	9						37
30- 39		9	19	12	2							42
20- 29	5	17	9	2	1							34
10- 19	33	13	1									47
0- 9	28											28
Total cases	66	40	36	27	18	23	7	3		1	1	222

The figures on time and distance have been organized in Table 13 to illustrate the pattern of travel applying to these 222 part-time farmers. Time, expense and fatigue of travel up to about 25 miles are not considered serious difficulties by most people who choose to live in the country and commute to work. Beyond that point the travel is usually viewed as a necessity rather than a matter of choice.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup>This point was particularly emphasized by responses to a questionnaire mailed in 1954 to a group of industrial employees interested in country living. Most would choose to drive 15 to 25 miles to work if by so doing they could live in a location suitable to their needs and resources.

**TABLE 14.—Average Distance Traveled and Time Spent Enroute to Nonfarm Employment by 222 Part-Time Farmers in 14 Ohio Counties, by Area and Economic Class of Farm, 1953**

Economic class	Southeast	Northeast	Western	Total
	Mean distance and time			
Residential PTF				
Distance (miles)	10	11	18	13
Travel time (minutes)	24	29	34	30
Subsistence PTF				
Distance	11	20	7	11
Travel time	26	41	21	26
Semi-commercial PTF				
Distance	13	16	13	14
Travel time	30	34	27	31
Commercial PTF				
Distance	11	14	15	13
Travel time	27	29	30	28
Total all classes				
Distance	12	14	15	13
Travel time	27	31	29	29
	Median distance and time			
Distance	7	12	17	12
Time	30	20	32	30

Are there any significant differences in respect to distance traveled to the nonfarm job and the amount of farming? So far as revealed by this study, the answer is "no" (Table 14). In respect to different areas of the state the average part-time farmer in western Ohio may travel a little more distance than the average part-time farmer in southeastern Ohio. This may reflect the relative road conditions and ease of travel in the two areas. (Or, it may be no more than a random variation in the sample.)

#### **Division of Time Between Nonfarm and Farm Employment**

The average part-time farmer contacted in this study spent 248 days in nonfarm employment in 1953. Deviations from this average were associated only to a limited extent with the size of farming operations. Those farming the least (Class I farms) averaged 263 days; these worked an average of 44 hours per week. Those farming the most (Class IV farms) averaged 240 days; these worked an average of 40.3 hours per week. Operators of Class II and III farms fell about halfway between these extremes both in hours per week and days per year. Thus, the operators on Class IV farms averaged only 23 days or about one month less nonfarm work annually than operators on Class I farms. The above comparisons tend to illustrate the relative inflexibility of time requirements associated with most types of nonfarm employment. Granting some exceptions, a full-time job on an eight-hour day, five-day week schedule was the typical situation for most operators regardless of the amount of farming they did in addition. Exceptions to this rule were most frequent among those who were doing the most farming.

How much time was spent at farm work by these operators and members of their families? For purposes of comparison the average hours reported are reduced to ten-hour days in Table 15. For those producing primarily for home consumption the time devoted to farm production and maintenance work might be considered as a spare-time activity scattered through the year. For those producing more extensively for the market, particularly Class IV farm operators, the time spent at farm and nonfarm work would draw heavily on the time and energy of the operator and use a substantial block of family labor.

The average Class IV operator devoted the equivalent of 110 ten-hour days to farm work (production and maintenance) in addition to the 240 days of nonfarm work. This adds up to 350 days. But this work load was not distributed equally through the year. Some opera-



**TABLE 15.—Average Days Spent at Nonfarm Work by Operator and at Farm Work by Operator and Other Family Members, 242 Cases, by Class of Part-Time Farm, Ohio, 1953**

Class of farm	Days of Labor*			Total farm
	Nonfarm, by operator	Farm, by operator	Farm, by other family members	
I	263	32	7	39
II	250	46	6	52
III	263	77	16	93
IV	240	110	50	160
Total	248	83	29	112

\*Hours reported spent at farm labor, by operator and other family members regardless of age or sex, reduced to ten-hour days. Nonfarm employment of operator is number of days reported regardless of hours per day.

tors reported spending 40 or more hours per week at farm work, during peak periods of the crop season, in addition to the time spent on the nonfarm job.

#### Employment of Wives and Other Household Members

Out of 242 cases, 35 wives (14 percent) had some nonfarm employment. By class of farm, the proportion of cases where both husband and wife were working was:

Class I farm	14 percent
Class II farm	13 percent
Class III farm	9 percent
Class IV farm	18 percent

The above indicates that wives in families on the larger part-time farms were as likely to have nonfarm employment as those on smaller farms.

A few wives (2 percent) reported some nonfarm employment and also doing some farm work. In all, 19 percent of the wives reported taking some definite and more or less routine responsibility for work performance on the farm. By class of farm the proportion was:

Class I farm	31 percent
Class II farm	17 percent
Class III farm	10 percent
Class IV farm	21 percent

Other household members—sons, daughters, and other relatives—were engaged in nonfarm employment in about the same frequency as wives—a total of 37 on the 242 farms. In some cases, more than one of these were residents in the same household. Another group, 34 in all, took some substantial responsibility for doing farm work.

The amount of time spent at farm work by both wives and other family members ranged up to more than 1000 hours in some cases; the equivalent of 100 standard ten-hour days per year. But for all 242 cases this time reduced to ten-hour days averaged 7, 6, 16, and 50 days for the Class I to Class IV farms respectively.

In about one-fifth of the cases, the wife was carrying a substantial share of the farm work—in some instances spending more hours at it than the husband. In another sixth of the cases some other household member or members did much of the farm work. In the remaining cases, a little less than two-thirds of the total, the husband was doing most of the farm work in addition to his nonfarm employment.

A larger farming operation was not necessarily associated with a larger family or more household members. It was more definitely associated with how the family chose to utilize the potential labor force of family members. The number of children per family and total household size were somewhat larger, on the average, for the Class I and II farms (residential and subsistence) than for the Class III and IV (semi-commercial and commercial) farms.

**TABLE 16.—Household Composition and Age of Household Members, by Class of Farm, 242 Part-Time Farms, Ohio, 1953**

Age composition of household	I and II farms	III and IV farms	All farms
Children of operator's family			
Less than 10 years	1.07	.65	.75
10 to 19 years	.87	.74	.77
20 or older	.17	.19	.18
Total	2.11	1.58	1.70
All household members			
Less than 10 years	1.12	.70	.81
10 to 19 years	.92	.76	.80
20 or older	2.25	2.39	2.36
Total	4.28	3.86	2.36

The number of household members who were over 20 years of age averaged slightly larger on the farms where more farming operations were carried on. Also, the sex ratio (number of males per 100 females) was higher on the larger scale part-time farms. This was particularly true with reference to the ratio of adult (20 years and older) household members; for each 100 adult females there were 115.3 adult males on Class III and IV part-time farms compared with 90.1 on Class I and II farms combined.

Country living and travel to a nonfarm job may create transportation problems. Normally the operator drove the family auto to work. In 87 cases (37% of the total number) the family owned two or more vehicles—38 families reported having two cars, and 49 owned both an auto and a truck. The truck might be used in part for farm purposes and in part for travel to work; or in some cases operating the truck was essential in the nonfarm work of the operator. A few families avoided the additional expense of owning a second vehicle by trading rides or operating as part of a car pool. In some cases where both husband and wife were employed, their travel schedules and places of employment made it necessary to have more than one vehicle.

## **V. THE FARM OPERATION**

### **Length of Residence on Present Farm**

At the times of interview, the length of time in residence on the present farm averaged 12 years for the 242 part-time farm families. In comparison, the period of residence averaged 15 years for all Ohio farmers, according to the 1954 census.

The average years in residence on the present farm was less in the western area than in the eastern areas of the state. Those operators of Class I and II part-time farms also averaged less years on the present farm than those operators in Class III and IV.

### **Tenure Status**

Most part-time farmers own farm real estate (Table 17). Nearly 90 percent of the operators interviewed owned all or part of the land operated; as a group they owned over three-fourths of the land involved in their part-time farming operations. Seventy-nine percent were full owners, with title to all the land operated, and an additional ten percent owned some and rented some additional land. The remaining 11 percent were full tenants. The majority of the latter were located on western Ohio Class IV farms.

That relatively few part-time farmers rent in all their land is explained in two ways. First, land owners may hesitate to share-rent to tenants who have some other job. Second, most families with steady



**Class I.** To some families a country home, with a few acres for garden, and living space for children is all they can use. These are called "Residential Part-Time Farmers".

**TABLE 17.—Average\* Acreage Involved, According to Tenure Class of Operator, by Area and Class of Farm, 242 Part-Time Farms, 14 Ohio Counties, 1953**

Area or class	Full Tenant†		Part-owner‡			Full Owner-Operated§		Operator-landlord		
	No.	Average acres	Average Acres			No.	Average acres	No.	Average acres owned	Operated
			No.	Owned	Operated					
Area										
Northeast	4	103	7	71	119	43	53	13	52	30
Southeast	7	140	11	114	151	64	76	15	79	54
Western	15	80	7	43	143	44	47	12	56	17
Farm class										
I	3	70	--	----	----	26	18	7	42	20
II	4	60	1	31	41	14	36	5	30	11
III	2	118	5	109	128	47	41	13	62	42
IV	17	112	19	78	148	64	99	15	86	45
Total or Average	26	99.8	25	82.2	139.8	151	61.9	40	63.2	35.2

\*Arithmetic mean.

†Full-tenants: rent in all the land they operate.

‡Part-owners: own some land and rent in additional acreage.

§Full owner-operators: own all the land they operate.

||Operator-landlord: operate only a part of land they own, renting out some to other operators.

employment, even with limited savings, can command the credit to purchase a dwelling and some acreage in the country about as readily as they can purchase a home in town.

The average age of those renting land was 35 years (at the time of interview) youngest of all the tenure groups. Part-owners averaged 43 years, and full owners, 49 years of age. Exceptions from the general pattern found full tenants ranging from 25 to 50 years of age, and full owners from 27 to 75 years.

About one in six rented out some of their land. Frequently this was a share rental with the landlord's share of the crops being consumed by livestock owned by the part-time operator. Those renting out some land averaged 52 years of age.

## Obtaining Use of Land

Over two-thirds of the operators of part-time farms had obtained all their land by purchase; 14 percent had inherited at least part of it, and eight percent had purchased some land and rented additional acreage. As noted above, only 11 percent rented all the land they operated.

A part-time farmer must be prepared to bid in competition with full-time farmers seeking additional land. Those owning land had purchased it an average of about 10 years prior to the time of interview. Comparable prices today (1957) would be more than double those that prevailed in 1943.44.

The average price paid for farm real estate at time of purchase was \$114 per acre for an average size tract of 58 acres. Differences in size of tract, quality of land, condition of buildings, and location relative to suburban areas, as well as general level of prices at time of purchase, resulted in wide variation from the average price. The cost at time of acquisition varied from \$500 to \$34,000 per tract of real estate, and from \$6 to \$1,700 per acre.

Smaller tracts, with a high proportion of the value in buildings, sell for higher prices per acre than larger tracts where the value of the improvements is spread over more acres. Those tracts used by subsistence and residential part-time farmers, averaging 24 acres, had cost \$162 per acre. Those of the commercial and semi-commercial operators, averaging 69 acres, had cost \$108 per acre.

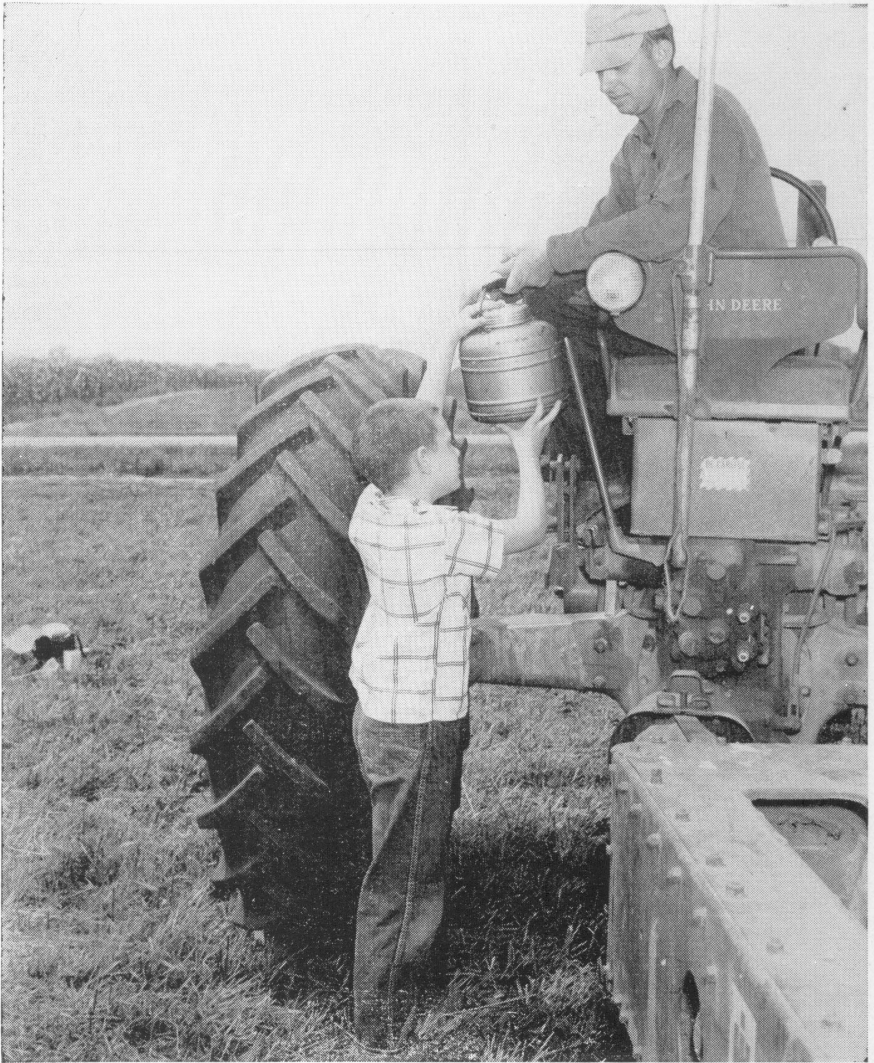
## Previous Use of the Land

Forty-nine, or 20 percent of the 242 operators, had farmed full-time from their present location before becoming part-time farmers. As full-time farmers they may have operated some additional acreage.

Out of the 242 part-time farmers interviewed, in 38 percent of the cases and involving 27 percent of the land in part-time farms, the previous operator had also been a part-time farmer. In 35 percent of the cases and involving 58 percent of the land, the previous operator had farmed the land full-time. In 18 percent of the cases, involving 10 percent of the land, the present unit had been part of a full-time farm. Accurate information was not obtained in the remaining nine percent of the cases involving five percent of the land.

These comparisons indicate that in at least 53 percent of the cases involving 68 percent of the acreage, the land was used by a full-time farm operator before acquisition by the present occupant. The above

indicates a fairly substantial net movement of land into part-time farming—partly because many of the tracts involved are relatively large and represent about two-thirds of the total acreage in the part-time farms in the sample.



**Class II. Some families had little more land and emphasized more production for home use, sales were small and incidental, these are called "Subsistence Part-Time Farmers".**

### **Land Use Patterns on Part-Time Farms**

The land use pattern of part-time farmers is little different from that of their full-time farming neighbors. While the preferences and abilities of the individual operator influence the production pattern on a particular farm, he cannot entirely disregard topography, soil type, and other physical factors; nor the economic factors that help determine type of farming areas.

The proportion of cropland harvested on part-time farms, and especially those in Class IV, was only slightly less than that for all farms. Analysis of acreage of specific crops harvested (corn, wheat, oats, and hay) indicated that part-time farmers devoted about the same proportion of their land to these crops as did all farmers in the area. The proportions for part-time farms, as here defined, was about the same as those computed from Census Economic Area reports, and those recorded in Farm Account Record Summaries.<sup>10</sup>

Crop yields and production reported on the part-time farms did not differ appreciably from those of all farmers. Weighted average yields for the major crops were about the same as those for all farmers reported in Ohio Agricultural Statistics.

The analysis of cropland harvested related to total acreage, and yields per acre for specific crops, would not indicate that part-time farmers as a group use the land resource more or less intensively or effectively than all farmers.

### **Livestock Kept on Part-Time Farms**

Several off-setting tendencies influence the amount of livestock kept on part-time farms. First, part-time farmers, the same as others, tend to follow the type or types of farming found to be most profitable in an area and best adapted to the land. Second, because labor tends to be in relatively short supply on a part-time farm the operator tends to shift to livestock enterprises which require relatively little labor. Or, if the land is adapted to cash crop production, particularly cash grain, the operator may keep no livestock. Or, if he does keep livestock, the tendency is to concentrate on one or a few, rather than several livestock enterprises.

Some livestock was kept on some farms in each of the four economic classes defined in this study. Only on the Class IV farms was enough livestock kept to produce much beyond subsistence needs of the

---

<sup>10</sup>For a more detailed discussion of this point, see pages 143-150, Unpublished Dissertation of W. A. Wayt; "Part-Time Farming in Ohio, with Special Reference to Its Use as a Route to Full-Time Farming", The Ohio State University, 1956.



**TABLE 18.—Foundation Livestock Kept by Different Classes of Part-Time Farmers, 242 Cases, Ohio, 1953**

Farm class	Number of cases	Kind of Livestock				
		Dairy cows	Beef cows	Sows	Ewes	Hens
		Average number per farm				
I	36	0.14	0.08	0.11	0.28	6.00
II	24	0.96	0.38	0.60	0.40	20.00
III	67	1.10	0.70	0.40	0.80	42.00
IV	115	3.80	1.70	0.92	6.90	41.00

family. The average number of foundation livestock kept on the farms visited are shown in Table 18. These numbers merely provide a physical basis for comparison. They are not typical of any particular farm. Neither do the average numbers of foundation livestock kept the year round fully reflect all the livestock kept. Some bought feeder cattle or pigs and a few produced broilers or turkeys.

Some part-time farm families, by concentrating or specializing in a limited number of enterprises, are able to work medium sized farms and still do considerable work off the farm. The maximum numbers of foundation livestock found on the part-time farms studied were: dairy cows—24, beef cows—28, ewes—50, sows—10. One poultryman had a laying flock of 375 hens; a turkey producer raised about 2,000 birds yearly.

#### **Machinery and Equipment**

One problem faced by part-time farmers is to avoid an excessive investment in machinery and at the same time be well enough equipped to get the farm work done in the limited time available.

Allowing for some exceptions, the average part-time farmer contacted in this study, did not have a larger investment in machinery per crop acre than the average full-time farmer. The outstanding exceptions were in the Class I and II groups where the crop acreage was so limited that production was almost entirely for home consumption.

Part-time farmers kept their machinery investment down in various ways. Some owned very little machinery, renting out their cropland and feeding their share of the crops to livestock; some purchased used

**TABLE 19.—Number of Specified\* Items of Farm Machinery and Equipment Owned, Average Age, and Whether New or Used when Acquired by 242 Part-Time Farmers, 14 Ohio Counties, 1953**

Machinery or equipment item owned	Average <sup>†</sup> age	Number Acquired		Total owned
		new	used	
Tractor <sup>‡</sup>	7	100	76	176
Plow	6	87	77	164
Cultivator	6	85	65	150
Disc	7	74	60	134
Mower	9	55	56	111
Grain drill	10	39	56	95
Corn planter	11	35	43	78
Manure spreader	9	33	45	78
Hay rake	10	24	46	70
Combine	7	13	13	26
Corn picker	7	11	10	21
Hay baler	4	10	3	13

\*Other items not listed included trailers and wagons, cultipackers, rotary hoes, spring tooth harrows, hay loaders, lime spreaders, ensilage cutters, grain binders, weed sprayers, threshing machine, feed grinders, etc.

<sup>†</sup>Mean age at time of interview, both new and used.

<sup>‡</sup>Excludes garden tractors.

machinery; some traded work and machinery or shared ownership with neighbors; some relied heavily on custom work. Over half of the part-time farmers interviewed reported having hired some custom work during the previous year. The net result of all these things are reflected in the figures given in Tables 19 and 20.

Referring to Table 19, the average age of the items of machinery found on 242 part-time farms was 7.8 years. Almost half (49%) had been used equipment when purchased. Some items—particularly mowers, drills, planters, rakes—often were converted horse-drawn equipment.

Investment in machinery was calculated at present worth. Some operators in all four classes owned practically no machinery. Only 73 percent owned tractors. Twelve operators owned one or more horses, a total of 33 in all, but most of these depended primarily on tractor drawn equipment.

**TABLE 20.—Investment in Machinery and Equipment, 242 Part-Time Farmers, by Class of Part-Time Farm, 14 Ohio Counties, 1953**

Farm class	Range	Average Investment		
		Per farm in class	Per farm owning	Per crop acre
I	\$ 0-2,000	\$ 299	\$ 599	\$284
II	50-1,800	308	389	75
III	150-3,900	963	1,324	57
IV	150-8,200	2,331	2,460	46
Total	\$ 0-8,200	\$1,451	\$1,800	\$ 49

The average investment in machinery per farm tended to increase with the size of farming operations. Many Class IV farm operators owned what would be considered a full set of machinery; but the average investment per crop acre was lower than for the other three classes because of a larger acreage farmed.

#### Use of Credit

Two-thirds of the 180 part-time farmers purchasing real estate from unrelated parties had used credit in obtaining the land. Those operators using credit had borrowed about 60 percent of the purchase price. The average loan was for \$4,400 on farms having an average price of \$7,300.

Individuals, savings and loan companies and banks, in that order, were the most frequent sources of credit. These three creditors accounted for over 85 percent of the recorded loans. In numerous cases of loans by individuals, the creditor was also the seller of the property. Some purchasers had used land contract financing. Federal Land Bank, life insurance companies, churches, and the United States Government were other reported sources of credit. The latter was involved in Veterans Administration and Tenant Purchase loans.

The length of the loan contract ranged from one to thirty-four years, with interest rates charged varying from three to seven percent. Most of the loan contracts either provided for amortization payments or permitted principal payments at interest due dates. The amortized loans might provide for annual, semi-annual, monthly, or even weekly payments. In nearly half the cases providing for amortization, the repayment plan called for monthly or weekly payments. Such repayment plans are clearly more applicable to nonfarm earnings than to the more irregular flow of farm income.

In financing the acquisition of equipment, livestock, and other chattels, part-time farmers used numerous sources of credit, including banks, production credit associations, equipment dealers, individuals, loan companies, and employees credit unions. While some used credit extensively, others had no recorded chattel debt, so that the average for the group was relatively low. Only 61 of the 242 had recorded chattel debts; and a total of only 36 cases, about 15 percent of the total cases, had both chattel and real estate debts.

### Assets and Net Worth

Most part-time farmers own real estate. As a result, the amount of tangible property owned by part-time farmers and its capital value are substantial although usually less than holdings of full-time farmers who are owner operators.

Within the sample studied, those who had purchased real estate did so an average of ten years before the time of interview. Therefore, the gain in capital value because of price inflation has been an important factor in increasing the present net worth, easing the burden of debt payments and increasing the rate of capital accumulation as measured in current dollars.

**TABLE 21.—Indicated Average of Farm Assets,\* Indebtedness,† and Net Worth of 242 Part-Time Farm Families, by Class of Farm, 14 Ohio Counties, 1953**

Class of farm	Indicated Ownership (means)						
	Livestock	Farm equipment	Total chattels‡	Farm real estate	Total assets	Total debt	Net worth
I	\$ 95	\$ 299	\$3,337	\$ 7,278	\$10,615	\$1,380	\$ 9,235
II	250	358	3,306	6,198	9,504	1,766	7,738
III	507	968	4,448	11,362	15,810	2,011	13,799
IV	1,656	2,331	6,704	14,484	21,188	2,743	18,445
Total	\$ 966	\$1,451	\$5,242	\$11,726	\$16,968	\$2,241	\$14,727

\*Estimated value of farm real estate, farm and home chattels

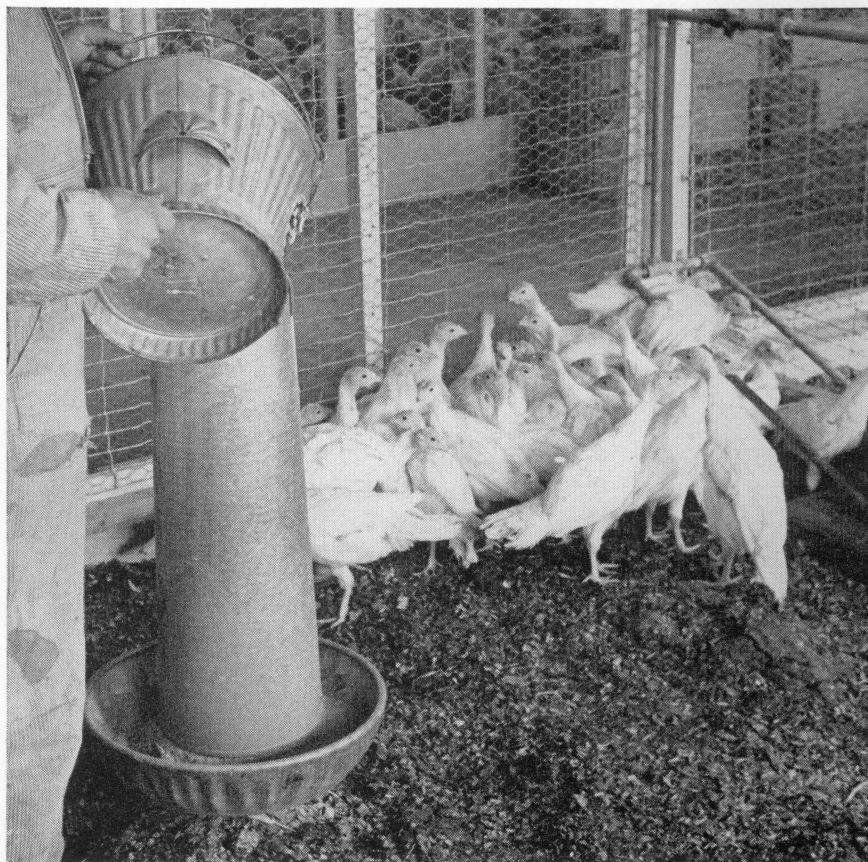
†Recorded real estate and chattel debt adjusted for time and repayment terms.

‡Total chattels include estimated value of household goods and automobiles

The amount of capital involved in farming part-time varies substantially with the amount of farming done. Some measure of this is provided in Table 21 which indicates the dollar value (at 1953-54 prices) of various kinds of property owned by the four classes of part-time farmers, as defined in this study.

### **Type of Farming as Indicated by Importance of Products Sold**

Part-time farmers follow patterns of crop production and land utilization similar to those of all farmers in the area, and most keep some livestock. Only 37 of the 242 part-time farmers interviewed reported no livestock on their farms during the previous year.

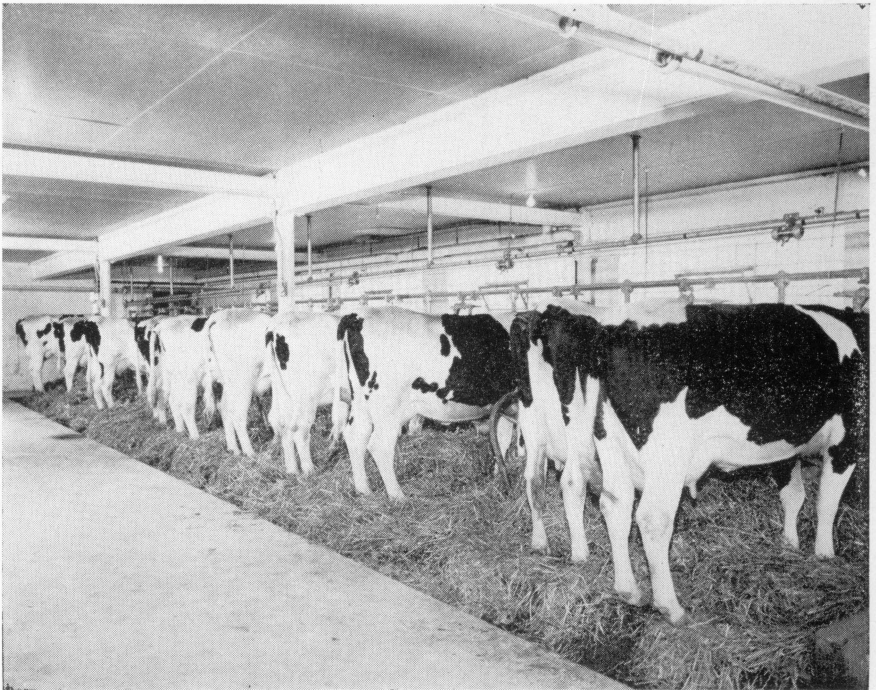


**Class III.** Some families produce more than just for subsistence, had produce to sell with a gross value of \$250 to \$1199, these were classified as "Semi-Commercial Part-Time Farmers".

Sales of livestock and livestock products accounted for about 70 percent of the gross farm income of the part-time farmers studied. In 187 cases, about three-fourths of the total group, operators reported some sales from livestock enterprises.

In the southeastern area, nearly 90 percent of gross sales were from livestock, in the northeastern and also in the southwestern area, livestock sales accounted for about three-fourths of total farm sales. In the northwestern area, cash crops were much more important, and less than one-third of the gross farm income came from livestock enterprises.

The varied character of the farming done by part-time operators can be illustrated in Table 22 for those selling enough to be considered commercial or semi-commercial part-time farmers.



**Class IV.** Nearly half the families visited emphasized production for sale and subsistence was of secondary importance. These operations were termed "Commercial Part-Time Farmers".

In 38 percent of the cases, three-fourths or more of the cash receipts came from some one class of livestock or livestock product, indicating a tendency to concentrate on one livestock enterprise. Twenty-one percent, mainly in western Ohio, obtained three-fourths or more of their cash receipts from cash crops, keeping little or no livestock for commercial production. A half or more of the gross receipts came from livestock in 70 percent and from cash crops in 30 percent of the cases.

**TABLE 22.—Type of Farming Engaged in by 182 Commercial and Semi-Commercial Part-Time Farmers, Classified by Relative Importance of Sales, and by General Type of Farming Areas, Ohio 1953**

Type of farm class	General Type of Farming Area			All Areas	
	Northeastern	Southeastern	Western	No.	Percent
Specialized*	No.	No.	No.	No.	Percent
Dairy*	4	19	3	26	14.3
Beef	7	8	2	17	9.3
Hog	2	4	5	11	6.0
Sheep	--	1	2	3	1.6
Poultry	5	5	3	13	7.1
Cash crop†	9	7	23	39	21.4
Dairy—poultry‡	6	5	1	12	6.6
Dairy—hog‡	2	1	--	3	1.6
Dairy—cash crop‡	1	2	2	5	2.7
Cash crop—beef§	1	1	4	6	3.3
Cash crop—dairy§	--	--	6	6	3.3
Cash crop—hogs§	1	--	2	3	1.6
Cash crop—poultry§	1	--	--	1	.5
Hog—beef	1	1	2	4	2.2
Hog—poultry	1	1	1	3	1.6
General livestock**	6	15	9	30	16.5
Total	47	70	65	182	99.6

\* Specialized production indicates 75 percent or more of the total sales resulted from that enterprise alone

†Crop sales (corn, wheat, oats, soybeans, tobacco, hay etc.) made up 75 percent or more of the total farm product sales

‡Dairy enterprise sales accounted for 50.74 percent of the total sales with the second listed item, second in importance

§Cash crop sales accounted for 50.74 percent of total sales with the second listed item second in importance

||These two enterprises ranked most important representing over 75 percent of total sales with neither alone over 50 percent

\*\*Livestock accounted for over 50 percent of sales with no enterprise of three or more representing over 25 percent of the total

Among the livestock enterprises, dairying stood first; followed by beef, hogs, poultry, and sheep, in that order. The tendency in part-time farming is not in the direction of greater intensity. Production is concentrated on a few enterprises in order to reduce and simplify labor requirements.

**Days Labor on Farm Compared with Standard Productive Man Work Units<sup>11</sup>**

<b>Crops</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>PMWU</b>
Corn	Acre	1.00
Wheat	"	.65
Oats	"	.50
Soybeans	"	.60
Alfalfa	"	.65
Other hay	"	.40
Tobacco	"	30.00
Orchard	"	20.00
Vineyard	"	20.00
Garden	"	10.00
<b>Livestock</b>		
Dairy cows	Per head per year	12.00
Dairy replacement	"	2.00
Dairy calves	"	.10
Ewes	"	.50
Lambs	"	.80
Beef cows	"	1.50
Beef heifers	"	1.00
Beef calves and steers	"	1.00
Brood sows	"	3.00
Market hogs	"	.25
Laying hens	"	.25
Broilers	Per 100	1.60
Turkeys	"	7.10

The average Ohio commercial family farm has a size of business which requires around 250 standard 10 hour days (Productive Man Work Units) of labor spent on crops and livestock. This standard labor requirement varies with the type of farming; but in general, a full-time farm providing only 200 productive man work units is considered small, one providing 300 or more PMWU is large.

---

<sup>11</sup>Definition of a Productive Man Work Unit: the amount of work performed in a ten-hour day for the production of crops, livestock and livestock products by an average worker with typical methods and equipment on the ordinary commercial farm. Following is the number of productive man work units accorded to different units of farm production:



Also, the rate of work accomplishment, or labor efficiency, varies with the individual and the farm—depending on energy, ability to organize work, labor saving equipment, lay-out of farm and other circumstances. This variation was found to apply to part-time farms in this study. A few operators have a size of business providing more than 300 PMWU and hold nonfarm jobs.

A comparison of the average days of labor spent at farm work and the productive man work units on the four classes of part-time farms is provided in Table 23. The total time reported included work on maintenance and improvements as well as farm production. On all four classes of farms the average days spent at farm work by the operator and other family members exceeded the PMWU by what would be the equivalent of a month or more of labor by one man. This is at least a rough indication that a month or more of labor time was spent on maintenance and improvements regardless of the size of farm, the amount of land in crops or livestock kept. Second, the average PMWU provided by crops and livestock indicated a size of business (for sale and home use) on the commercial part-time farms (Class IV) equal to about half that considered satisfactory for a full-time farm business. In comparison, as measured by PMWU, it would take about six semi-commercial, or 10 subsistence or 30 residential part-time farms to equal the production (for home use and sale) of one typical full-time family farm.

**TABLE 23.—Average Days Labor Reported Spent on Farm, Productive Man Work Units, and Gross Cash Sales, 242 Part-Time Farms, by Class of Farm, 14 Ohio Counties, 1953**

Part-time farm class	Days labor reported spent on farm*	Productive Man Work Units (Standard 10-hour Days of Labor)				Gross cash sales
		Garden	Crops	Livestock	Total	
I	39	2	2	5	9	\$ 10
II	52	3	3	20	26	171
III	93	2	10	31	43	638
IV	160	3	40	84	127	3,358
Total (or average)	112	3	22	84	76	\$1,786

\*Hours reported spent by operator and other family members converted to ten-hour days. Of the total time reported, labor by the operator represented about four-fifths on Class I, II and III farms and two-thirds on Class IV farms.

**TABLE 24.—Average Expense and Returns, Agricultural Production, 242 Part-Time Farms, Grouped by Economic Class, Ohio, 1953\***

Item	Economic Class of Farm			
	I	II	III	IV
Number of cases	36	24	67	115
Average size (acres)	13	35	50	102
<b>Expenses of Production:</b>				
Interest @ 4% on investment:				
Real estate (dwelling excepted)	\$ 60	\$ 99	\$ 295	\$ 434
Machinery	12	12	39	93
Livestock	4	10	20	66
Total interest	76	121	354	593
Depreciation:				
Buildings and fences	10	25	82	116
Machinery and equipment	30	31	97	233
Total depreciation	40	56	179	349
Cash expenses:				
Feed purchased	47	99	243	456
Fertilizer and lime	4	12	67	214
Hired labor	--	--	--	58
Custom work	3	13	43	194
Seeds and plants	4	8	27	95
Gas and oil	3	12	40	142
Building and fence repair	2	13	56	72
Machinery repair	12	14	39	93
Taxes and insurance	15	29	78	136
Miscellaneous	10	25	50	100
Total cash expenses	100	225	643	1560
Total cost	216	402	1176	2502
<b>Value of Production—Home Used Products Valued at Farm Prices:</b>				
Products sold	10	171	638	3358
Products used in home	200	400	400	400
Total gross value	210	571	1038	3758
Deduct cost of production	216	402	1176	2502
Net gain (or loss)	— 6	169	— 138	1256
Return per hour of family labor	—0.02	0.33	— 0.15	0.79

**Value of Production—Home Used Products Valued at Retail Prices:**

Products sold	10	171	638	3358
Products used in home	500	1000	1000	1000
Total gross value	510	1171	1638	4358
Deduct cost of production	216	402	1176	2502
Net gain	294	769	462	1856
Return per hour of family labor	\$0.75	\$1.48	\$0.50	\$1.16

\*(Basis for calculation of costs and of returns from part-time farming.)

1. Interest charges: calculated at 4 percent of the estimated present market value of real estate (less the value of the dwelling), livestock and machinery.
2. Depreciation: buildings used in farming were depreciated on the basis of 40 years life at the present market value as estimated from the tax valuation of buildings. The tax valuation—market value ratio used was \$35 to \$100. Fences were depreciated on an estimated value of \$2.00 per rod and an estimated life of 20 years. The amount of fence per farm was estimated to be five rods per acre. Machinery was depreciated at 10 percent of its average inventory value. The average age of machinery was 7.8 years.
3. Cash expenses: estimates were obtained from respondents on feed purchased, fertilizer and lime, hired labor and machine custom work. Other cash farm expenses were estimated on the basis of typical expenses of Ohio farm account records at the following rates: seeds and plants, \$2.00 per crop acre; gas and oil, \$3.00 per crop acre (this was adjusted down because of the relatively large expenditures for machine custom work); building and fence repair, 2 percent of the estimated value of these improvements; machine repair, 4 percent of the estimated present value; taxes (property only) at 2 percent of the recorded tax valuation of real estate and the estimated tax valuation of personal property; insurance at the average rate of 30 cents per hundred on the estimated value of insurable property. The item, miscellaneous expense is an estimate to cover all other incidental expenses associated with the farm business.
4. Value of products sold: estimates of dollar amounts furnished by respondents so far as possible. When dollar amount was not given, the physical volume sold was valued at average farm prices.
5. Value of products used in the home: based on home management records kept by Ohio farm families, 1953, 1954 and 1955. Published data: Dollars Buy Ohio Farm Family Living for 1955; MM-135, Home Management, The Ohio Agricultural Extension Service, Sept., 1956.

The above comparisons are based on physical quantities—acres in various crops and numbers of various kinds of livestock kept or produced. Projection into dollar values of products sold (last column, Table 23) does not fully reflect the relative value of production on the different classes of part-time farms because, particularly on the smaller farms, home consumed products account for the major part of the value of production. This value is considered in a following section.

In Table 24 it is estimated that the average residential part-time farm family used home-produced food worth \$200 if valued at farm prices and worth \$500 if valued at retail prices. The average family in the other three classes (II, III and IV) kept enough livestock that the food produced for home use had a value of \$400 at farm prices and \$1000 if valued at retail prices. The above comparisons on value of home-produced food are based on a household of four people, the average size of the 242 households contacted in the study.<sup>12</sup>

### **Production for Sale vs. Home Use**

On the smaller part-time farms, production for sale was distinctly a secondary or incidental feature. At the other extreme, commercial part-time farms, which represented nearly half of all cases, gave primary emphasis to production for sale. The volume of sales from these is about half that from Ohio full-time family farms.

### **Cost of Production**

In Table 24 costs have been grouped under three sub-heads: (1) interest, (2) depreciation and (3) cash expenses. In the short run, the importance of interest and depreciation may not be apparent to many farm operators unless interest is paid on debt or worn out machinery needs replacement. When prices are rising the dollar value of property may increase enough to off-set the physical deterioration of real estate improvements and equipment.

Any complete accounting of farm expenses cannot ignore the importance of interest on the capital invested in the farm business or the cost of depreciation on property which wears out. This principle holds for the part-time as well as the full-time farmer. As calculated in Table 24, interest and depreciation costs approximated more than half the total cost of production of the average residential (Class I) part-time farmer, a little less than half in case of the subsistence and semi-commercial and about two-fifths the total cost of the average commercial part-time farmer.

When the cash costs are added, total cost of production for Class I and III part-time farms exceeded the value of production when figured at farm prices, but was less than the value when products used in the home are valued at retail prices.

---

<sup>12</sup>See Footnote 5, Table 24.

Why were costs and returns more favorable for Class II and Class IV farms? Class I and II farms had about the same investment in machinery. Class II had more acreage but the investment in real estate was not enough more to make much difference in the cost of production. Compared with Class I, the cash costs of production on the Class II farms did not increase as much as did the volume of production. Efficiency of production even on the subsistence level favored the group which produced the most.

The same principle applies to production on Class III and Class IV farms. Class III farms gave some emphasis to commercial production and had a substantial investment in real estate, machinery and livestock. But production for sale was on too small a scale to compensate for the increased costs.

To sum up, comparing one part-time farm with another two levels of production are relatively economical and two are not.

If production for subsistence is the objective, the costs-returns relationship favors production to supply home needs as fully as possible, without investing much in machinery or real estate and with sales limited to a little seasonal surplus.

Costs-returns relationship was also relatively favorable where enough emphasis was given to commercial production to justify nearly as large investments in real estate, machinery, etc. as are necessary to farm full-time on a small scale.

As a final comparison, the net gain (or loss) resulting from production was divided by the average hours spent in farm work by the operators and other family members to obtain the return per hour of family labor. See Table 24 for figures.

The above figures serve to illustrate the relative costs and returns at different levels of operation in an average situation. At all levels of operation individual cases deviated substantially from the average.

If money is the consideration, the evidence indicates a reasonably attractive potential in production for family living—providing the resources are sufficiently utilized to keep down costs and also provided the production for home use is valued entirely at retail prices.

Whether the above levels of return appear attractive depends partly on attitudes of the operator and family in respect to the use of time. As reported, about one-fifth of the labor on Class I, II, and III part-time farms and about one-third of the labor on Class IV part-time farms was supplied by members other than the operator. The alternative opportunities for the use of this family labor may be very limited.

As a spare time activity, a modest return for the use of labor may be acceptable. The commercial part-time farmers who reported an average of 1600 hours of operator's and other family labor spent at farm work per year were well beyond the limits of just using spare time.

The return per hour of labor on these commercial part-time farms probably is not greatly different from the average of all Ohio farms, provided a credit is given for products used in the home. (Without the credit for value of products used in the home, this return on the commercial part-time farms averaged \$.55 per hour.) The labor returns realized on products sold may be less than the average of all farmers.

An operator of the typical commercial part-time farm faces the inefficiencies of small volume production and the problem of getting the work done on time because of the inflexible time requirements of the nonfarm job. Relatively high returns from nonfarm employment appear to offset this disadvantage.

Part-time farming provides a greater total return than many individuals and families can attain either from full-time farming, under their existing circumstances, or from nonfarm employment alone.

## **VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

The purpose of this publication has been to bring together information about part-time farming which may be useful to present and prospective part-time farmers and to organizations and agencies concerned with developments in rural areas.

The principal reason for study was that a substantial share of Ohio's farm operators have other employment and this proportion is increasing. Specifically, 37 percent spent 100 days or more in nonfarm work in 1954 as compared with 21 percent in 1939. In this study operators spending 100 days or more a year in nonfarm work were termed part-time farmers.

Most of the information was obtained from interviews with 242 part-time farm families located to give some representation to the three major types of farming areas in Ohio. These were supplemented by approximately 190 mailed questionnaires and 62 additional personal interviews to further substantiate some findings.

An enumeration of all families resident in 83 sample square mile areas revealed that about a third were full-time farmers, a third part-time farmers and a third rural residents doing no farming. The part-time farmers were operating about a third of the area in farms. Of

those classed as part-time farmers 15 percent had a production valued at less than \$250 (farm prices) and in this study are termed residential part-time farmers; 10 percent termed subsistence part-time farmers, had a production of more than \$250 but sold less than that amount; 28 percent, termed semi-commercial, sold from \$250 up to \$1199 of products; 47 percent, termed commercial part-time farmers, sold \$1200 or more of products. The fact that nearly half produced primarily for sale emphasizes that the recent increase in part-time farming is because operators of many medium sized farms have other employment. Another important implication is that many open country residents do no farming.

No major difference existed in dwellings and home conveniences on the various classes of part-time farms. All homes had electricity. Dwellings averaged 50 years old; so, modernization often had been done or was planned. Condition and appearance of farmsteads rated about the same as on other farms in the area.

This study dealt with these questions about part-time farming: geographical distribution, reasons people engage in part-time farming, their future plans, their background characteristics, type of nonfarm employment, distance to work, division of time between the farm and other work, amount of farming done, type of farming, capital employed, family living and income—farm and nonfarm—associated with different sized farming operations.

Analysis brought out the following points:

1. People are moving into part-time farming from two directions, former urban residents moving to the country; rural youth beginning to farm; and former full-time farmers adding a nonfarm job to their farming activities.
2. The present frequency of, and recent increase in, part-time farming are associated directly with the extent of employment opportunity rather than the quality of land or type of farming area.
3. The desire for country living is the most important reason people gave for becoming part-time farmers although most had a complex of reasons—a place to rear children, increase income, lower living costs, desire to farm, a place to retire, etc.
4. Why people want to live in the country and farm part-time (as contrasted with just a rural residence) is in most instances associated with the fact that husband or wife, or both, have a farm background. Many had lived in town for a period before moving

to the country. Their future plans nearly always contemplated continuing to live in the country and most intend to farm on some scale—part or full-time.

5. In education, age of operator and size of household, these part-time farm families represented a fairly complete cross section of the total population.
6. Nonfarm earnings tended to be highest for those operators with the most education. Gross farm earnings were not so consistently associated with education although they averaged the least for those with less than an 8th grade education.
7. The nonfarm occupational pattern was varied. About a fourth were self employed, the remainder worked for others. About half were industrial employees; transportation, construction, mining, and sales accounted for most of the others.
8. Most regular nonfarm jobs demand 40 to 45 hours per week and about 250 days per year of the workers time. Of 242 part-time operators, the hours worked per year ranged from 800 up to 2800, and averaged 248 days. Most nonfarm jobs have relatively inflexible time requirements.
9. Employment at the present job for an average of 8 years, residence in the present location for about 12 years, and farming part-time for an average of about 10 years—all point to relative stability and permanence of part-time farm families in the farm-nonfarm job combination.
10. Commuting distance to the nonfarm jobs, ranging from zero to more than 50 miles, averaged about 13 miles, requiring about 30 minutes of travel time one way. Only 16 percent of part-time farmers traveled more than 25 miles. Little concern was expressed over the time and expense of traveling that distance. Most Ohio farms are within commuting range of substantial job opportunities.
11. Operators farming the least spent only a little more time in non-farm employment than those farming the most. The latter and their families spent more hours at farm work and had little time for other activities. The proportion of farms where the wife also had a nonfarm job was also about the same for larger as for smaller part-time farms.
12. The time and energy requirements of the farm plus another job may lessen participation in community organizations. About two-thirds of the families indicated affiliation with church, less



than a fourth with the Farm Bureau, Grange or a labor group, respectively. Nearly two-fifths participated in some other special interest group such as a club or fraternal organization.

13. Most of these part-time farmers were land owners, having acquired their farms by purchase. A home and some acreage in the country can be financed about as easily as a home in town. Also, land owners may be reluctant to rent to an operator not spending all his time on the farm.
14. In about half of the cases and involving about two-thirds of the acreage, the land had been operated either as part of—or as the entire farm of a full-time farmer prior to acquisition by the part-time farmer.
15. How much capital to farm part-time? Those farming on a commercial scale had physical assets averaging about \$21,000 and a net worth of \$18,000—about double the assets and net worth of those operating on a subsistence or residential level. The above values cover livestock, machinery, motor vehicles, household goods, and real estate. Individual cases varied widely from these averages.
16. Two-thirds of the part-time farmers purchasing land from unrelated persons had used credit, amounting to about 60% of the purchase price, in obtaining the land. The sources of credit, both for real estate and chattel loans, were about the same as those used by other farmers. Most loans were amortized, with provision for annual, semi-annual, monthly or weekly payments. In the latter instances the dependence on nonfarm earnings is clearly indicated.
17. Part-time farm operators tend to follow the general type of agriculture to which their area is best adapted, the same as do full-time farmers. The utilization of the land resource, especially on the larger part-time farms, was about the same as that of other farms in the area. But part-time operators tend to limit the number of enterprises in order to simplify the labor requirements. In most cases this is not a move toward greater intensity of operation or specialization.
18. The amount of time spent at farm work by the operator and other family members increased with the size of farm business but at a slower rate—indicating greater relative efficiency in the use of labor on the larger farms. On these larger farms (classified as commercial) an average of 160 ten-hour days were spent at farm

work by the operator and other household members—two-thirds by operator. This, plus the outside employment, leaves little time for other activities.

19. Does part-time farming pay in terms of money saved or increased earnings? The gross earnings of the part-time farm families interviewed was approximately \$6,000; made up of almost \$2,000 of gross farm sales (excluding home used products), and a little over \$4,000 from the nonfarm work. Provided production for home use is valued at retail prices, most part-time farmers contacted in this study had some net return above costs. If production (for both home use and for sale) is valued at prices received by farmers, two groups in particular did not cover costs: (1) those producing the least for subsistence and (2) those producing about equally for subsistence and for sale. In both cases the volume of production was too small to cover the cost of equipment and other expenses of production.

After paying all costs, the return per hour of labor to the average commercial part-time farmer contacted in this study, probably was not much different from the average return received by other farmers. Granting that the average part-time farmer may receive even less because of various reasons, his high earnings in the other job still makes the farm-nonfarm job combination attractive.

20. Most part-time farmers producing primarily for subsistence occupied more land than is necessary for that purpose alone; from one to ten acres was all the land put to effective use in most cases. In some instances, a substantial part of a holding might be poorly adapted to agriculture and therefore much larger than the area needed for crops and pasture.

At the other end of the scale, if commercial production is the objective the volume of business must be large enough to justify most of the labor saving devices now commonplace on the full-time commercial farm.