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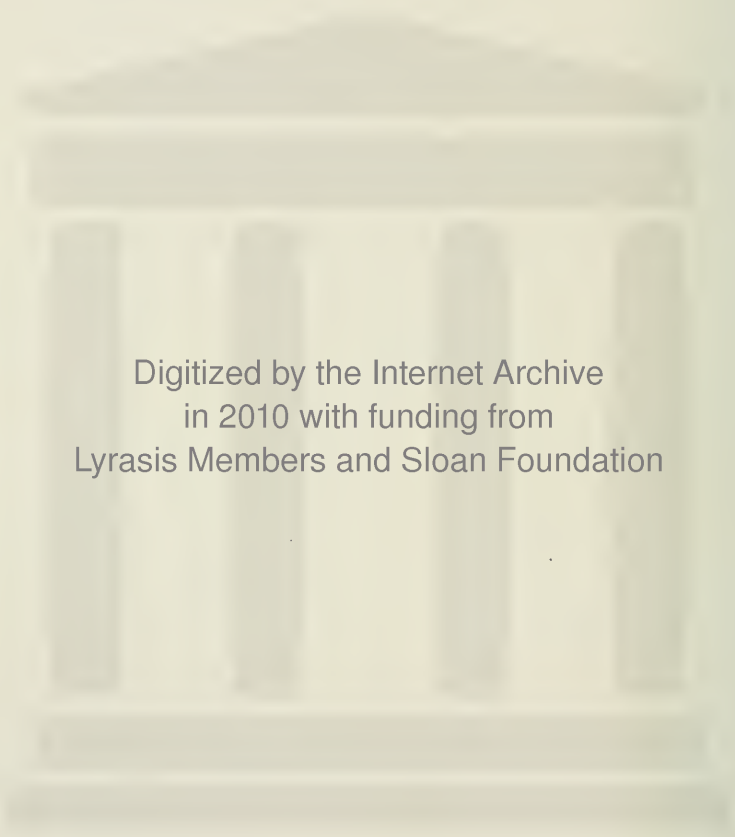
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**BULLETIN 439**

**December 1959**

**FARMING, FARM PEOPLE,  
and FARM EXPANSION**

**In Fayette, Raleigh, and Summers Counties,  
West Virginia, 1958**

**WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION**

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AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION  
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MORGANTOWN

# Farming, Farm People, and Farm Expansion in Fayette, Raleigh, and Summers Counties, West Virginia, 1958

WILLIAM H. METZLER and W. W. ARMENTROUT

THE purpose of this report is to give some insight into the farming situation, attitudes of the farm people, and possibilities for increasing farm income in the Fayette, Raleigh, and Summers county area of West Virginia. Agriculture is important in the economy of an area even though relatively few of the area's people are engaged in it. If income from agriculture, or any other industry, could be increased, the total income in the area would be increased by an amount several times the size of the original increased income. The original increase in income is passed from one service industry to another before it is all taken out of circulation through savings. It is the industries which bring outside dollars into the community which are most important in establishing the amount of business that will be transacted within the community.

Some of the basic data in regard to the agriculture of Fayette, Raleigh, and Summers counties are presented here. They were obtained in a special survey made for the Area Rural Development Committee in May 1958. They represent the findings from a random sample—297 farms in the 3-county area.

TABLE 1. SOURCES OF INCOME OF SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS LIVING ON FARMS, FAYETTE, RALEIGH, AND SUMMERS COUNTIES, 1958

ITEM	NUMBER	PERCENT
All farms in survey .....	297	100
Farm households with		
all income from farming .....	41	14
Major source of income from		
farming .....	49	16
Agriculture a minor source of		
income .....	207	70

Only 14 percent of the families living on farms in the 3-county area obtain all their income from agriculture (Table 1). Nonfarm work is, for most of the others, the major source of income but they do some farming on the side. They may do farming to supplement their regular incomes, or it may be that they simply like farming.

This means also that many of our farms have become chiefly residences for nonfarm people. It may mean that the soil resources are not always used to the best advantage.

Those who live by farming alone are close to the bottom of the income scale (Table 2). Only a few had net incomes of more than \$2,000 per year. Of those families with the two sources of income—agriculture and nonfarm work—approximately half had total incomes of more than \$5,000. Those families with incomes from pensions, social security, unemployment compensation, and similar “nonwork” sources, in addition to agriculture, usually came within the income bracket of \$1,000 to \$3,000.

TABLE 2. SOURCE AND SIZE OF INCOMES OF FAMILIES LIVING ON SAMPLE FARMS, FAYETTE, RALEIGH, AND SUMMERS COUNTIES, 1958

SOURCE OF INCOME	ALL FARMERS REPORTING	FAMILIES WITH INCOME						
		UNDER \$500	\$500 TO \$599	\$1,000 TO \$1,999	\$2,000 TO \$2,999	\$3,000 TO \$3,999	\$4,000 TO \$4,999	\$5,000 AND OVER
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>
All families .....	297	19	26	52	55	36	29	80
Income from agriculture only .....	41	15	13	11	2	—	—	—
Agriculture plus nonfarm work .....	85	—	—	7	10	13	13	42
Agriculture plus nonwork ..	83	3	12	28	28	7	1	4
Agriculture, nonfarm work, and nonwork ..	88	1	1	6	15	16	15	34

A third of the farms in the three counties are less than 30 acres in size (Table 3). Usually they have investments ranging from \$2,000 to \$2,500 in land and farm buildings. Another third are from 30 to 100 acres in size but do not have an equivalent increase in the size of investment. The proportion of the land in crops in the latter is smaller than in the former, but there is a marked increase in acreages of pastureland and woodland. Farms containing more than 100 acres tend still further in the direction of pasture and woodland.

Most farms in the area are also small in terms of the total amount of work done on them (Table 4). In 1957, on half the farms, this was less than 50 days. Only 10 percent were large enough to occupy the full time of a worker.

Note that the income figures here are for net income from the farm and do not include income from other work done by the farmer or by

TABLE 3. VALUE AND USE OF SAMPLE FARMS, BY SIZE, FAYETTE, RALEIGH, AND SUMMERS COUNTIES, 1958

FARM SIZE (ACRES)	NUMBER OF FARMS IN SAMPLE	PERCENTAGE OF ALL FARMS	AVERAGE VALUE OF LAND AND BUILDINGS PER FARM**	AVERAGE NUMBER OF ACRES IN*		
				CROPS	OPEN PERMANENT PASTURE	WOODLAND
All farms .....	297	100	<i>Dollars</i> 3,138	13	34	37
Under 10 .....	50	17	2,100	4	2	1
10 to 29 .....	54	18	2,378	5	6	4
30 to 49 .....	33	11	3,847	8	16	14
50 to 69 .....	36	12	2,269	11	21	22
70 to 99 .....	36	12	2,678	14	24	38
100 to 139 .....	38	13	3,321	17	46	45
140 to 219 .....	30	10	3,823	20	62	77
220 and over ..	20	7	7,639	42	196	205

\*Does not cover an average of 4 acres per farm that were devoted to other uses, for example, building areas, garden space, roads, and so on.

\*\*Excludes value of dwelling.

TABLE 4. NET INCOME OF FARMERS ON SAMPLE FARMS RELATED TO TOTAL DAYS OF WORK, FAYETTE, RALEIGH, AND SUMMERS COUNTIES, 1957

TOTAL NET FARM INCOME (DOLLARS)	ALL FARMERS REPORT- ING	TOTAL NUMBER OF DAYS OF WORK ON THE FARM*					AVERAGE NUMBER DAYS OF WORK
		UNDER 50	50 TO 99	100 TO 149	150 and OVER		
	<i>Number</i>						
Minus income .....	33	19	5	5	4		50.7
\$ 0 to 249 .....	30	26	4	0	0		26.3
250 to 499 .....	28	21	5	1	1		35.4
500 to 749 .....	43	28	13	1	1		48.2
750 to 999 .....	43	17	20	4	2		65.6
1,000 to 1,499 .....	68	30	23	12	3		66.8
1,500 to 1,999 .....	31	8	7	7	9		121.8
2,000 and over .....	21	3	5	2	11		165.0
Total .....	297	152	82	32	31		78.9

\*Calculated in terms of total number of days of productive work required.

members of his family. More than half received less than \$1,000 from their farming operations in 1957, but neither did they do any large amount of farm work.

Operators who lost money despite a large amount of work were usually beginners who were putting out money in order to build up their business.

The major source of income from farms in the area in 1957 was from the sale of livestock and livestock products (Table 5). Sales of broilers and other poultry accounted for almost half of the income from agriculture, \$164,604. Sales of cattle were next in importance. Dairying



TABLE 5. TOTAL SALES FROM 297 SAMPLE FARMS, FAYETTE, RALEIGH, AND SUMMERS COUNTIES, 1957

ITEM SOLD	VALUES OF SALES (DOLLARS)	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SALES	PERCENTAGE OF LIVESTOCK SALES
Livestock .....	260,853	72	100
Poultry .....	164,604	—	63
Cattle .....	74,860	—	29
Hogs .....	6,078	—	2
Sheep .....	13,313	—	5
Milk and Cream .....	34,616	10	—
Eggs .....	23,439	6	—
Crops .....	23,790	6	—
Timber .....	9,522	3	—
Wool .....	2,357	1	—
Other .....	3,081	2	—
Total .....	359,544	100	—

is on the increase in this area and now accounts for about 10 percent of the farm income. Sales of eggs are also important. In 1957 they brought about as much income to the area as sales of all crops—grain, feed, fruit, vegetables.

Total sales averaged \$1,200 per farm.

Approximately three-fourths of the farmers in the area have dairy cattle (Table 6). Approximately three-fourths have poultry. These, then, make up the stable backbone of the agriculture in the area. Some hogs, however, were raised on more than half of the farms. Only one-fourth had beef cattle.

The highest return both per farm and in total was from poultry.

TABLE 6. NUMBER, VALUE, AND SALES OF LIVESTOCK ON SAMPLE FARMS, FAYETTE, RALEIGH, AND SUMMERS COUNTIES, 1957

TYPE OF LIVESTOCK	NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF FARMS		TOTAL FARMS REPORTED	AVERAGE NUMBER PER FARM	TOTAL VALUE OF SALES	PERCENT- AGE OF TOTAL SALES	AVERAGE VALUE OF SALES PER FARM
	Number	Percent					
Total farms .....	297	100	—	—	260,049	100	876
Farms with - -							
Dairy cattle .....	214	72	1,146	5	38,488	15	180
Beef cattle .....	73	25	932	13	36,372	14	498
Hogs .....	163	55	613	4	6,078	2	37
Sheep .....	37	12	1,709	46	13,313	5	360
Poultry .....	227	76	181,739	801	164,604	63	725
Workstock .....	127	43	188	1	1,194	1	9
Other livestock .....	25	8	—	—	—	—	—

Sales of crops are a minor source of income to farmers in the area (Table 7). Although many produce hay or grain for use on the farm, the amount sold is not important. Corn comes nearest to an exception. Some corn was produced on almost half of the farms, and sales of corn averaged \$125 per farm.

One-third of the farms produced some fruit, but sales of fruit averaged only \$62. One-fifth of the farms produced some commercial vegetables. Sales of vegetables averaged about \$200 per farm.

The biggest expense to farmers in the area is for the purchase of feed and hay for poultry and livestock (Table 8). A reduction in this cost might be possible through home production of feed; or purchases from local producers might be expanded.

TABLE 7. ACREAGE AND SALES OF MAJOR CROPS ON SAMPLE FARMS, FAYETTE, RALEIGH, AND SUMMERS COUNTIES, 1957

CROP	TOTAL FARMERS REPORTING	PERCENT-AGE OF FARMERS	TOTAL ACRE-AGE IN CROP	AVERAGE ACREAGE PER FARM	AVERAGE VALUE OF SALES PER FARM*	AVERAGE RETURN PER ACRE
	<i>Number</i>				<i>Dollars</i>	<i>Dollars</i>
All farms .....	297	100	—	—	82	—
Corn .....	142	48	443	3	125	40
Small grains for grain ..	56	19	382	7	43	6
Small grains for hay .....	57	19	257	4	53	12
Alfalfa .....	50	17	339	7	53	8
Other hay .....	181	61	1923	11	108	10
Fruit, orchard .....	105	35	183	2	62	36
Fruit, small .....	35	12	44	1	79	63
Vegetables .....	58	20	98	2	199	118

\*Only 289 farms reported any sales, so this average per farm is based on those farms that had sales.

TABLE 8. FARM EXPENSES ON SAMPLE FARMS, FAYETTE, RALEIGH, SUMMERS COUNTIES, 1957

ITEM	NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF ALL FARMS		TOTAL EXPENSE	PERCENT-AGE OF TOTAL EXPENSE	AVERAGE EXPENSE PER FARM REPORTING	AVERAGE EXPENSE ALL FARMS
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Dollars</i>		<i>Dollars</i>	<i>Dollars</i>
All farms .....	297	100	213,366	100	718	718
Fertilizer and lime .....	269	91	17,283	8	64	58
Other crop expenses .....	283	95	12,427	6	44	42
Feed and hay .....	236	79	102,823	48	436	346
Other livestock expenses .....	123	41	4,419	2	36	15
Hired labor, custom work, repair work .....	232	78	72,622	34	313	244
Other expenses .....	69	23	3,792	2	55	13

Farmers in the area do not always use the most up-to-date methods (Table 9). This is as likely to be due to inadequate finances as to lack of interest. Greater use of the most productive methods should bring larger amounts of money into the community.

TABLE 9. EXTENT TO WHICH FARMERS ON SAMPLE FARMS WERE USING NEW FARM PRACTICES, FAYETTE, RALEIGH, SUMMERS COUNTIES, 1957

FARM PRACTICE	NUMBER OF FARMERS REPORTING	PERCENTAGE OF ALL FARMERS
All farmers .....	297	100
Had soil tested during last 5 years ....	142	48
Applied lime to cropland during last 5 years .....	147	49
Applied lime to pasture during last 5 years .....	109	37
Fertilized pasture during last 3 years .....	111	37
Made changes in fertilizer program during last 5 years .....	66	22
Seeded pasture during last 5 years ..	96	3
Mow or clip pasture each year .....	124	42
Made changes in crops grown during last 5 years .....	81	27
Made changes in insect control during last 5 years .....	85	29
Made changes in feeding livestock during last 5 years .....	46	15
Made changes in controlling livestock during last 5 years .....	64	22

Only the farmers under 50 years of age were asked whether they would like to expand or change their farm business. Almost half of them said they would like to do so (Table 10). One in eight would like to expand his livestock operations. An equal number would like to clear or improve additional land. Others would like to add to their machinery or equipment, or expand their fertilizer program.

Most of those wanting to make these changes were part-time and subsistence farmers. Most of them stated that they had difficulty in making the changes because of lack of capital.

The reason most frequently given by farmers for lack of interest in increasing income from farming was that they had other employment or were not interested in farming. Two other reasons were important also: (1) satisfaction with the farm at its present size; and, (2) the idea that farming was not profitable and there was no use in expanding operations.

Farms in the area are not highly mechanized (Table 11). More than half operate with horse-drawn equipment. Hay is still harvested by old-fashioned methods. Few of the farmers who keep dairy cattle have milking machines.

TABLE 10. ATTITUDES OF FARMERS ON SAMPLE FARMS IN REGARD TO INCREASING SIZE OF FARM BUSINESS, FAYETTE, RALEIGH, SUMMERS COUNTIES, 1958

ITEM	ALL FARMERS REPORTING	PERCENT-AGE OF ALL FARMERS	ALL COMMERCIAL FARMERS REPORTING	OTHER FARMERS REPORTING
	<i>Number</i>		<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>
Type of Changes				
All farmers under 50 years old .....	118	100	28	90
All farmers wishing to make changes .....	50	42	10	40
Increase livestock enterprise .....	14	12	5	9
Change to more fruits and vegetables .....	3	3	1	2
Land-clearing, fences, ponds, etc. ....	14	12	2	12
Add machinery and equipment ....	10	8	2	8
Use more fertilizer .....	6	5	—	6
Farmers with obstacles to making changes .....	48	—	—	—
Lack of money .....	39	33	8	31
Lack of market .....	6	5	—	6
Lack of time .....	3	3	2	1
Farmers who do not desire to make changes .....	68	58	18	50
Reasons for not making changes :				
Other employment or lack of interest in farming .....	36	30	5	31
Satisfied with present farm .....	11	9	6	5
No money or lack of profit in farming .....	8	7	2	6
Poor soil or location .....	4	3	3	1
Illness .....	3	3	1	2
Labor not available .....	2	2	1	1

TABLE 11. TYPE OF FARM EQUIPMENT ON SAMPLE FARMS BY TYPE OF FARM, FAYETTE, RALEIGH, SUMMERS COUNTIES, 1958

EQUIPMENT	NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF FARMS WITH SPECIFIED EQUIPMENT					
	ALL FARMS		COMMERCIAL FARMS		OTHER FARMS	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Total farms .....	297	100	78	100	219	100
Tractor .....	101	34	39	50	62	28
Truck .....	146	49	50	64	96	44
Automobile used in farm business .....	97	33	34	44	63	29
Pickup balers .....	13	4	8	10	5	2
Milking machines .....	4	1	3	4	1	*
Horse-drawn equipment	161	54	39	50	123	56

\*Less than 0.5 percent.

TABLE 12. DESIRE OF FARMERS ON SAMPLE FARMS TO EXPAND OPERATION,  
TO STOP FARMING OR NONFARM WORK, AND TO LEAVE THE AREA, FAYETTE,  
RALEIGH, SUMMERS COUNTIES, 1958

ITEM	ALL FARMERS UNDER 50 YEARS OF AGE REPORTING		WISH TO EXPAND FARM OPERATIONS		ARE WILLING TO BORROW TO EXPAND FARM OPERATIONS		THOUGHT OF GIVING UP FARMING		PLANNED TO GIVE UP NONFARM WORK		HAVE THOUGHT OF LEAVING THE AREA	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
All farmers .....	118	100	50	42	29	25	20	17	2	2	17	14
Type of farm:												
Commercial .....	28	100	10	36	6	21	4	14	1	4	4	14
Other .....	90	100	40	44	23	26	16	18	1	1	13	14
Source of income:												
All from agriculture .....	14	*	4	—	3	—	1	—	0	—	0	—
Major part from agriculture .....	10	*	1	—	1	—	1	—	0	—	1	—
Minor part from agriculture .....	94	100	45	48	25	27	18	19	2	2	16	17

\* Percentages not calculated because of small numbers.

This may reflect lack of capital, or it may indicate that existing farms are too small to permit their operators to farm with the highest degree of efficiency.

Many of the farmers under 50 years of age who were interested in expanding their farm operations were willing to borrow money in order to do so (Table 12). These people were largely those who had additional source of income.

Lack of ability to obtain capital to expand existing farm operations is one of the major problems in the area. When farmers wish to expand their operations and bring more money into the community, how can the community help them get the necessary capital?

Most of the farm homes in the area have electricity, refrigerators, and power washing machines (Table 13). Three-fourths of them have television sets, and one-third have deep-freeze units.

Although the farmers are most alert to the advantages of electricity, they lack some other modern conveniences. Approximately half have running water in the house, and half have telephones. Only a third have flush toilets, and a fourth have central heating.

## What These Figures Mean

These are only a few of the findings of the 1958 survey of farms and farm people in these three counties. A more complete analysis will be presented in a later report. It will indicate that many farm and nonfarm people are not fully employed. They constitute unused resources that might be bringing more income and spending power to themselves and to the community.

Although the return per hour of work is much less in farming than

TABLE 13. HOUSEHOLD EQUIPMENT OF FARM FAMILIES ON SAMPLE FARMS, FAYETTE, RALEIGH, SUMMERS COUNTIES, 1958

ITEM	NUMBER OF FAMILIES REPORTING	PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES REPORTING
All families .....	297	100
Electric lights .....	296	99
Water in house .....	166	56
Refrigerator .....	289	97
Deep-freeze unit .....	103	35
Power washing machine .....	285	96
Television set .....	217	73
Automobile or truck .....	211	71
Flush toilet .....	107	36
Central heating .....	79	27
Telephone .....	139	47
Daily newspaper .....	172	58

in most occupations in the area, two important aspects concerning farming in the area must be considered: (1) The \$2,500,000 in agricultural sales mean several times that amount in the total economy; and, (2) the equally important fact that our farms are primarily homes for people who like to live in the country, although their major income is from some other source.

Both for them and for the community, income from farming is important. This can be increased by such measures as the following: (1) more credit available for farm development; (2) more careful selection of crops adapted to the area; (3) greater use by farm operators of the latest farm practices; and, (4) more complete use of all the good soil resources that are available in the area.

The trend in agriculture is toward greater specialization in the crops and products that can be produced to the greatest advantage. For West Virginia, these are grade C milk, eggs, broilers, and turkeys. The area is best adapted to a grassland economy, and production trends in the State indicate that specialization here is proceeding in that direction.

The major problem in the 3-county area does not involve agriculture directly. It stems from the decrease in labor required for mining coal. Agriculture will be unable to provide employment for all these additional people. The situation calls for both local industrial expansion and increased efficiency in the use of other resources in the area.

The 1958 survey indicates that the area has a large amount of labor that is not fully utilized. It indicates also that a large amount of local capital exists and that there are many residents with managerial experience and ability. What is lacking is a community plan that will utilize all these resources in such a way as to build the economy the area needs and should have.





