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## Managing the Part-Time Farm

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Historic Document

managing the  
**PART-TIME FARM**

Cooperative Extension Service PURDUE UNIVERSITY Lafayette, Indiana



Managing the Part-Time Farm

by C. A. Sargent  
Department of Agricultural Economics

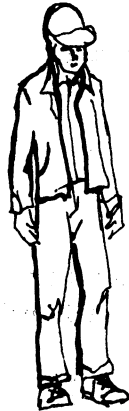
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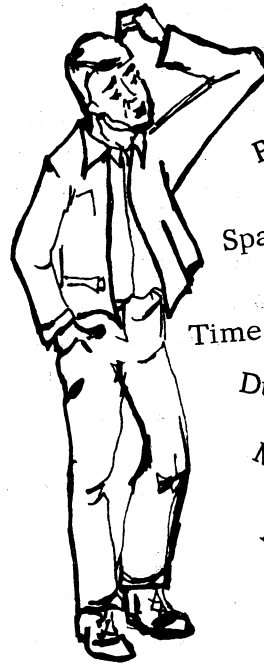
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Full-time Farmer



Full-time Farmer



Part-time Farmer

Spare-time Farmer

Time and a half Farmer

Dually Employed

Multiple job holder

Moon-lighter

TO THE PART-TIME FARMER

Are you a part-time farmer? Do you operate a farm and also have an off-farm job that requires much of your time? If so, you are part of a big group for today 1 out of 3 Indiana farmers works in town.

Why are so many people farming part-time? Most part-time farmers and their wives were raised on farms, they prefer country living and enjoy managing their own farm enterprises. Some have been full-time commercial farmers who want better incomes without giving up farming entirely. A few hope to become full-time farmers.

Your farm may be large or small, but it is likely that you work a full week away from home and run the farm in your spare time with considerable family help. The farm is probably a sideline business with the off-farm job your main source of income. It is quite possible your farm is not making a profit or farm operations conflict with the job.

This publication discusses some of the major farm management problems that come from working at two jobs and offers guidelines for solving them. We assume you want to continue farming in your spare time and have resources like those available to many part-time farm families. Our purpose is to help you get more profit and more satisfaction from your farm business.

MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Working on a job and running a farm at the same time requires the part-time farm to be operated differently than the full-time farm. The problems are formidable--but if recognized, adjustments can be made to handle them.

Problem: Limited Time to Farm

The part-time farmer is short on time for labor and time for managing the farm.

Most of the unique problems of spare-time farming can be traced to this severe time restriction.

Studies of part-time farmers have shown the operator and other family members do most of the farm work with very little hired labor. Family labor is thought of as being free or at least a low-cost resource. The operator often works an eight-hour day, 40 hours a week, away from home. He may be willing and able to put in approximately 20 hours a week at farm work, after hours and on weekends. Available family labor may add another eight hours a week to the labor supply.

The yearly labor supply would add up to about 1,500 hours on such a farm. Commercial farm operators usually work 3,000 to 5,000 hours per year. Our "typical" part-time farmer has the equivalent of half a man labor force to put to work. With half a man, the farm business has to be relatively small. Small scale enterprises may mean high unit costs. Certain jobs may suffer from lack of attention, and peak work loads interfere with off-farm work schedules.

Seasonally employed people have a chance to do considerable farm work during part of the year and can plan their farm operations to take advantage of a big labor supply for short periods.

#### Possible Solutions

Consider livestock and crop enterprises that give a high return to labor and do not require a lot of labor or supervision.

- Examples: \* Beef cows require less labor and management than dairy cows
- \* Corn requires less labor and management than hay

Substitute capital for labor by investing in labor-saving equipment and buildings.

- Examples: \* Partially slatted floors for hogs
- \* Running water to all buildings

Organize your farm around activities that utilize family labor.

- Examples: \* Raise dairy heifers for sale instead of buying and feeding out heavy cattle
- \* Small machinery units instead of big, expensive equipment

Avoid peak work loads unless you are seasonally employed -- particularly at planting time.

- Examples: \* Raise some livestock instead of all crops to spread work throughout the year
- \* Speed up planting time with good equipment and hired labor

Hire custom work done.

- Examples: \* Have custom operators harvest grain or fill silo
- \* Hire corn planting done

Rent out land to other farmers or to government.

- Examples: \* Rent crop land to neighbors and keep livestock on rough land

- \* Put corn into feed grain program

### Problem: Limited Capital

To some extent, capital or money can be substituted for labor or time. For example: a large capital investment in a highly automated laying house setup allows a part-time farmer to care for 5,000 hens with four hours of labor a day. The enterprise is large enough to be efficient and labor is reduced to a minimum.

But investment money may be as scarce as time. Family living expenditures and farm expenses can easily use up income from the job and the farm, leaving little for farm investments. And of course any investment in the farm should show as much or more profit as putting money into alternative non-farm investments.

The part-time farmer often faces difficult management problems because of the limited resources under his control. If he expands his enterprises he soon runs out of family labor and must hire expensive labor. Capital may be available to set up high volume, highly automated production units, but committing large amounts of capital to long-term investment in specialized facilities can be risky.

### Possible Solutions

Select enterprises that require less capital and use more labor.

- Examples:
- \* Raise feeder pigs instead of feeding heavy cattle
  - \* Raise tobacco or truck garden crops instead of field crops requiring large acreage and big machinery

Consider "contract farming" with someone else providing capital.

- Examples:
- \* Produce eggs with facilities financed by feed processor or egg marketing firm
  - \* Raise replacements for laying hen flocks on contract

Rent, borrow, trade machine work or own machinery cooperatively.

- Examples:
- \* Rent second tractor during busy season rather than owning two tractors.
  - \* Trade silo filling for combining with neighbor

### Problem: Small-sized Enterprises

Part-time farms are essentially miniature full-time farms. The kind of crop and livestock enterprises are usually the same as on larger commercial farms in the same neighborhood. Most part-time farms used to be full-time farms before the operator took an outside job or before a person with an outside job bought the farm.

Small-scale enterprises are contrary to our concepts of the modern farm. Studies into the economies to be gained from large-scale enterprise as well as practical farm experience show the importance of a high volume of business to hold down production costs. Enterprise size on many part-time farms is far below what is considered minimum for most economical production. This is more true of livestock enterprises than of crops.

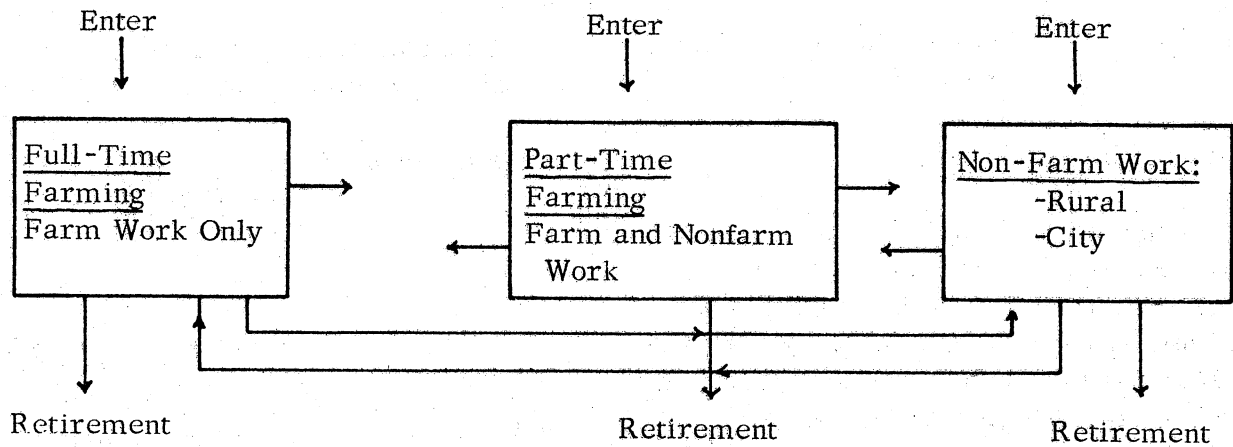


Figure 1. Diagram of farm and nonfarm occupations with routes leading into and out of part-time farming.

But some crop and livestock enterprises can be operated on a small scale and still be fairly efficient. Beef cows and tobacco are two such activities. Dairy herds, beef feeding and many major field crops require large-scale operations to become competitive.

Select enterprises that can be operated efficiently on a small scale.

- Examples:
- \* Beef cows or sheep instead of dairy cows
  - \* Tobacco instead of wheat

Possible Solutions

Specialize in only one livestock enterprise and make it as large as possible.

Specialize in an enterprise that utilizes a particular skill of the operator, a unique resource or a special market.

- Examples:
- \* Raise hogs only instead of hogs, chickens and beef cattle
  - \* Keep 5,000 laying hens and no crops or other livestock

- Examples:
- \* Develop recreational area if near large population center and land is scenic or water available
  - \* Produce and market special products such as maple syrup, sorghum or furbearing animals

Specialize in only one or two crops.

- Examples:
- \* Raise only corn and pasture crops to eliminate need for grain and machinery
  - \* Raise truck garden crop on best land and rent out the rest

Problem: Staying Put, Getting Out or Getting In?

The future plans of the part-time farmer have a bearing on management decisions. Some people look at part-time farming as a temporary stopover between full-time farming and complete departure from the farm. A smaller number consider it a way to work



into full-time farming. When questioned about their future plans, the majority of part-time farmers say they will continue two jobs until retirement. (See Figure 1)

The family that plans to continue farming indefinitely should consider improving the farm business to increase income and make farming more compatible with the outside job. This could mean reorganizing around more appropriate enterprises and making operational changes. Long-term farm investments can be considered.

The farmer who is not as sure about the future, and may quit farming soon, should view his farm differently. He should make the best use of "leftover" resources that he controls now and "salvage" what he can of land, buildings, equipment and livestock. Big changes involving new farm investments may not be justified. He can make improvements in his operation that avoid long-term commitments.

The operator viewing part-time farming as a stepping stone to a full-time commercial operation has the same problems as any beginning farmer. He needs to acquire a larger, more efficient farm unit that will provide enough income to replace earnings from the non-farm job. The small number of people going into full-time farming is evidence that this route is not easy to travel.

#### Possible Solutions

Make "extensive" rather than "intensive" use of land.

- Examples: \*
- \* Run beef cows or sheep over several acres of unimproved pasture
  - \* Avoid land clearing, renovation, tiling or other big land investment to boost production

"Salvage" old buildings and used machinery with a minimum of new investment.

- Examples: \*
- \* Use old dairy barn for feeder pig production with minimal remodeling
  - \* Repair old tractor instead of buying new one

Make only short-term investments with quick payback.

- Examples: \*
- \* Invest in more fertilizer to boost yields instead of buying more land
  - \* Put up low-cost building that can be written off in ten years

#### ORGANIZING THE PART-TIME FARM

Farm planning is deciding how to organize the farm to get the most out of land, labor and capital. Systematic planning procedures have been developed to help combine farm resources into the best package. Farm organization refers to the choice of crop and livestock enterprise and the size or level of operation.

The part-time farmer can follow the same planning process used by commercial farmers, but his limited resources should lead to a different farm organization.

Management recommendations assume the manager wants to maximize dollar returns from resources committed to the farm business. When farming is primarily a hobby and not a business, the manager may be more interested in pleasure than in profit. The motivation for spare-time farming is likely a combination of the two for many people.



Table 1. Crop requirements and estimated net returns to labor.

Crop	Amount of land for economical production	Labor requirements		Machinery requirements	Potential net return to labor per acre commercial farms	10%* higher costs on small acreages
		Seasonal	Total			
Major field crops						
Corn	Large acreage	High	Low	High	\$20-\$40	\$15-\$35
Wheat	Large acreage	High	Low	High	\$10-\$20	\$ 5-\$15
Soybeans	Large acreage	High	Low	High	\$15-\$30	\$10-\$25
Hay crops	Large acreage	High	Medium	High	\$ 0-\$10	-\$5-\$ 5
Pasture crops	Small acreage	Low	Low	Low	\$ 0-\$10	X
Tobacco	Small acreage	Medium	High	Low	\$500-\$800	
Specialty crops						
Tomatoes	Small acreage	High	High	Medium	\$100-\$800	
Sweet corn & pop corn	Medium acreage	High	Medium	High	\$20-\$40	
Apples & other tree fruit	Small acreage	High	High	High	\$100-\$200	
Truck garden: melons, strawberries, cucumbers, etc.	Small acreage	High	High	Medium	Great variation but relatively high	
Home garden	Small acreage	Medium	Medium	Low	Great variation but relatively high	

\*Production costs could be considerably higher than this on many part-time farms and result in no labor returns. Production costs on pasture crops, tobacco and specialty crops requiring small acreages are assumed to be the same for commercial and part-time farms.

Table 2. Net returns to 100-day labor for several crop and livestock enterprises.

Enterprise	Resources required to employ one man 100 days			Net return* to 100 days labor
	Capital Value of livestock equip. & bldgs.	Land required acres & quality	Management high-med. - low	
<u>A. Crops</u>				
<u>Corn</u>	\$45,000 (land & machinery)	125 acres High quality	Medium	\$3,750.
<u>Tobacco</u>	\$ 4,000 (land & machinery)	2.5 acres High quality & allotment	High	\$1,500.
<u>Tomatoes</u>	\$ 5,000 (land & machinery)	10 acres High quality	High	\$1,300.
<u>B. Livestock</u>				
<u>Feeder Pigs</u>				
<u>Sold</u> 35 sows	\$ 5,635	35 acres High quality	High	\$1,460
<u>Commercial Laying</u>				
<u>Flock</u> 1600 laying hens	\$ 6,720	9 acres High quality	High	\$ 950.
<u>Beef Cows</u> 40 cows-90% Calf crop- Calves sold	\$13,760	120 acres Low quality	Low	\$ 545.
<u>Sheep</u> 150 ewes and lambs	\$ 4,650	50 acres Low quality	Low	\$ 300.

\*Assumes level of efficiency reached on commercial farms.



Crops: What Kind and How Many Acres?

A logical place to start is with land and the cropping system. Both the amount and quality of land are important, particularly on farms with considerable land. Farmers with only small acreages will not have a big enough crop output to justify a full line of good equipment needed for a diversified cropping system.

Farms of less than 80 acres:

1. Raise only one kind of field crop on tillable land for cash sale; or one kind of feed for your livestock.
2. Concentrate on specialty crops like truck garden, tobacco, small fruits, or on livestock that requires little land.
3. Put land into permanent pasture and/or government land retirement programs rather than cropping at all.
4. Rent out the land to other farmers.
5. Rent some of the crop machinery or hire custom work done.

When land makes up a small part of the total farm investment, the best use of the family labor supply and farm buildings and equipment available becomes more important than land use. More and better alternatives are open to the manager of a larger farm, and he is more likely to make money by cropping the land himself.

Farms of more than 80 acres:

1. Select the highest profit crops adapted to the soil.
2. Grow as many acres of these crops as will produce sustained high yields. In Indiana, corn, soybeans and tobacco have been the high return field crops.

3. Follow a different cropping system on level or fertile land versus hilly or less fertile land.

4. Where erosion and/or low fertility are problems include meadow crops in the rotation or go to permanent grass. On level, fertile land, grow largely row crops.

The profit potential and enterprise requirements will largely determine the crops to choose. Table 1 gives relative requirements of major field crops and some specialty crops, with estimates of net return at two levels of efficiency. The lower returns on major field crops are for small, part-time farms with 10 percent higher production costs than on larger commercial farms. The higher returns can be reached on larger part-time farms specializing in one or two crops on sufficient acreages, and are comparable to earnings on well managed, full-time farms.

Corn, wheat, soybeans and tobacco have a ready market as cash crops. Success with specialty crops depends on unique marketing arrangements, suitable soil and climate, and on special skills.

Home gardens are not as important to the part-time farmer today as in the past when self-sufficiency was the goal of many farm residents. Family food bills can be lowered, but the savings are not much larger than can be had through careful buying and seasonal purchases and storage. Family labor can be used productively here, however.

Rough land in woods and "scenery" can be used, too. Again, a special market is needed to convert these assets into cash income. These forest crops products are marketable in parts of the state -

- |                 |              |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Saw logs        | Maple syrup  |
| Pulp wood       | Veneer logs  |
| Christmas trees | Wild berries |

Table 3. Livestock requirements and estimated net returns to labor.

Livestock enterprise	Feed requirements			Labor per unit	Capital per unit	Net returns per hour of labor	
	Corn <u>1</u> / Equivalent	Hay & Pasture <u>2</u> / equivalent	Protein <u>3</u> / lbs.			With costs on commercial-sized enterprises	With 10% higher <u>4</u> / costs on small enterprises
	bu.	ton	lbs.	days	\$	\$	\$
Sow (2 litters, feeder pigs sold)	67	.6	860	2.8	161	1.46	.70
Sow (2 litters raised)	220	1.0	1700	5.5	384	1.47	.65
Feeder pigs (bought)	11.3	.03	65	.2	31	.62	NONE
Beef cow (calf sold)	2	5.5	75	2.5	344	.54	.16
Beef cow (calf fed out)	35	7.25	350	5	471	.30	NONE
Feeder steer-hay program	45	2.5	380	1.8	203	.10	NONE
Feeder steer-corn silage	47	1.25	540	1.65	203	.94	NONE
Ewe and lamb	1.5	1.0	15	.65	31	.30	NONE
Commercial laying flock (100)	109	-	3300	6	420	.95	NONE
Broilers (1000)	-	-	7150	4	1540	.96	NONE
Turkeys (1000)	550	-	39500	40	5050	.97	NONE

1/ Approximate corn equivalent value of various grain feeds; e.g., 1 bu. oats = .5 bu. corn equivalent.

2/ Forage (grass silage, hay and pasture) required, does not include corn silage. 1T. pasture = 1T. hay equivalent; 3T. grass silage = 1T. hay for feeder cattle.

3/ Includes supplement, mash, starter feeds and salt and mineral.

4/ Production costs on many part-time farms may be higher than on large-scale, efficient operations. If unit costs are 20% higher, there is no return to labor on any of these enterprises.



## Fitting Crop and Livestock Enterprises to Land and Labor

Planning the over-all farm organization by starting with the land, next crops, and then determining livestock is illustrated in the six steps shown in Figure 2. This procedure works well where land is the most important farm resource. In Step 1, the land is classified into three possible general uses based on its capability. Step 2 considers other available resources such as machinery, buildings, labor supply, markets and the manager's ability. Then in Step 3, a land use plan is set up using cash crops, feed crops, forest products or recreation, that fit the land. Step 4 is to market cash crops, forest products or recreational services. In Step 5, livestock is fitted to the feed and labor available, and in Step 6, livestock and livestock products are marketed.

Planning a farm in this way leads to a farm organization that gives the greatest possible returns to land, but not necessarily the best return to labor or the highest return on capital investment.

Another way to look at organizing the farm is to select those enterprises that give the highest return per hour of labor, rather than make the best use of land. Where land is relatively unimportant, enterprises that bring maximum returns to labor may give the greatest net returns to the farm.

In Table 2, three crop enterprises and four livestock enterprises are shown with estimates of the capital, land and management resources needed for each enterprise. The resources required to employ an operator 100 days is given along with the approximate net returns for 100 days' work.

Of the crop enterprises, corn and tobacco appear to be the most profitable. Feeder pigs show the greatest return to labor among the four livestock enterprises.

Obviously, beef cows fit in a much different situation than a laying flock. Other resources must be considered besides labor.

## Livestock: What Kind and How Many?

High-yielding, high-profit crops offer the best earning opportunities on farms with a sizeable acreage of productive land. It makes sense to go as far as possible with a good cropping system, then consider livestock to provide year-round employment and to utilize unsaleable feed. Returns from most livestock enterprises per hour of labor are usually low compared to returns from crops. This seems to be more often true of part-time farms than commercial farms.

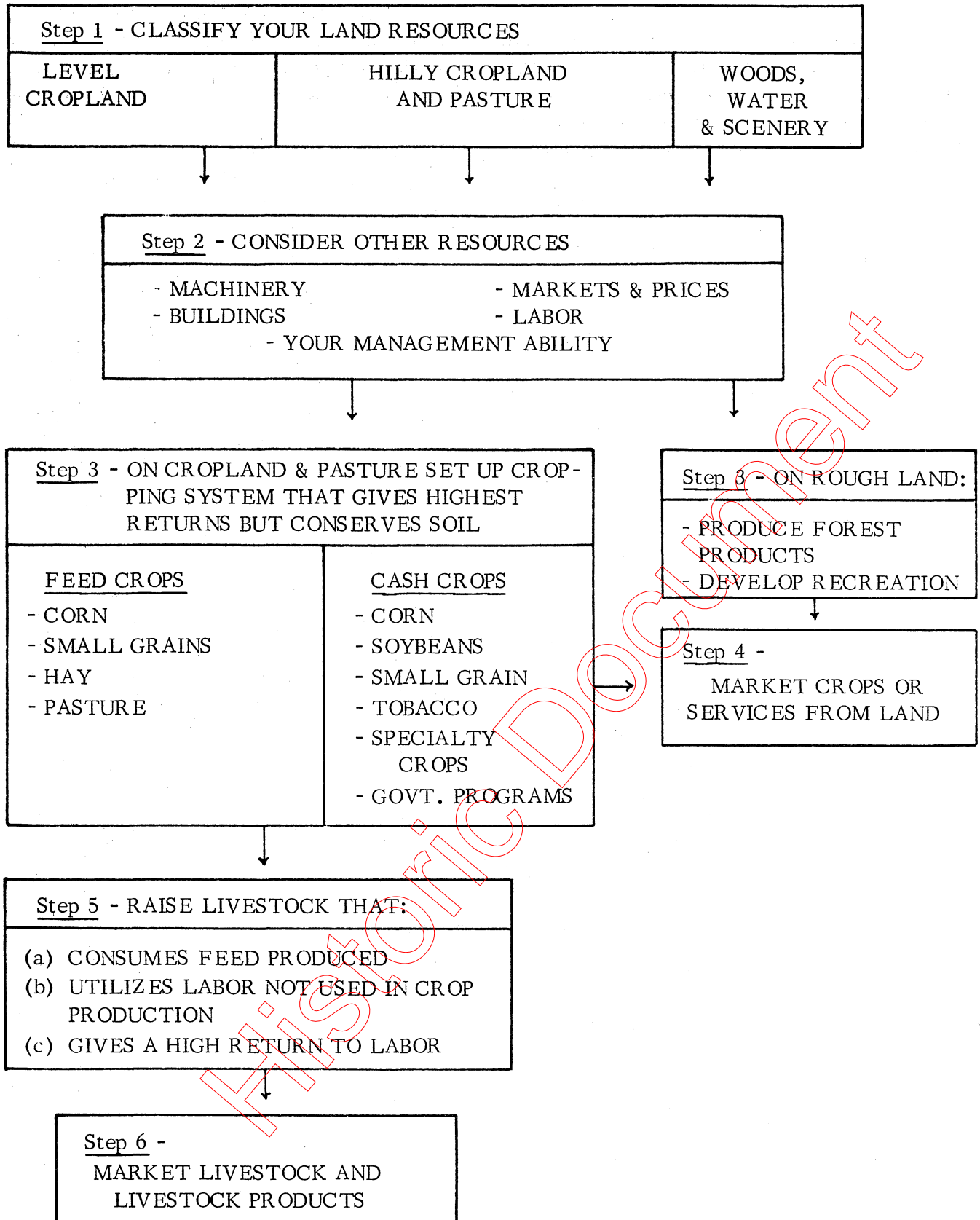
The kind of livestock to raise depends in part on the kind of feed produced from a sound cropping program. If your farm has large supplies of forage, then beef cattle or sheep are good possibilities. On farms with lots of corn, hogs or beef cattle may fit. Poultry farmers seldom depend on home-grown feed.

Some kinds of livestock do not work out well on part-time farms even with feed available for them. A dairy herd would use unmarketable forage and pasture, but overhead costs of a milk house, a bulk tank and an expensive milking barn means a small herd is inefficient. Large herds (30 or more cows) require more labor and more attention than most part-time farmers can supply.

Sheep feeding and feeding beef cattle to heavy weights requires high level production and marketing skills. Both enterprises have high capital requirements and involve considerable risk.

Feed, labor and capital requirements for several livestock enterprises are listed in Table 3. Net returns to labor are given for large commercial operations and for smaller enterprises with 10 percent higher costs. Physical requirements are based on

Figure 2. Steps in Planning the Overall Farm Organization Starting with Land





efficient commercial farm data and would not be true for smaller enterprises.

As can be seen in Table 3, a 10 percent increase in total production costs wipes out any chance for profits in most enterprises. Part-time farmers with small livestock operations probably show little or no profit

when the cost of all production items is figured on the basis of their market value. This fact points up the importance of specializing in one livestock enterprise to get sufficient volume, the need to hold down costs, and the value of high livestock productivity.

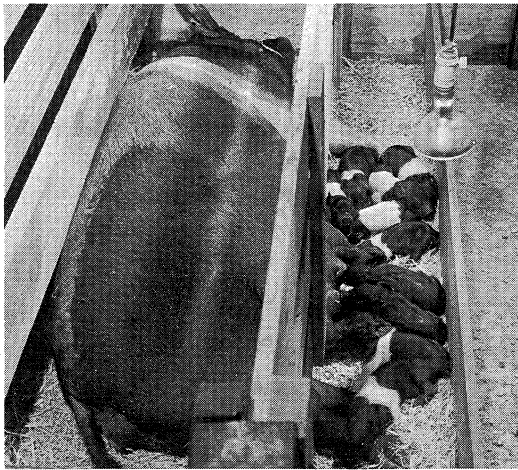
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### LIVESTOCK ENTERPRISES THAT FIT BEST

Hogs and beef cattle probably fit more part-time farms in Indiana than any other kind of livestock. Sheep and poultry have not been as consistently profitable or as well suited on as many farms, but offer possibilities in special circumstances.

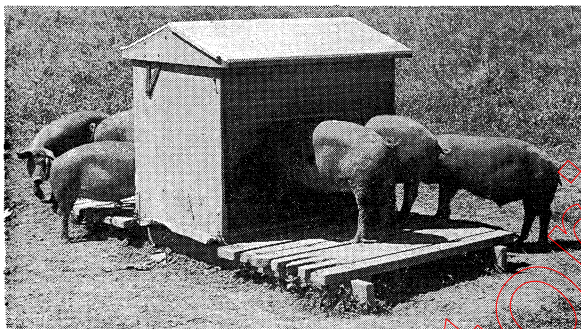
Hogs provide as good income opportunities as any livestock. Large scale production is desirable but not as important as in some other enterprises.

Equipment and facilities need to be handy but are not necessarily expensive. Within the hog enterprise there are at least three distinct production programs:



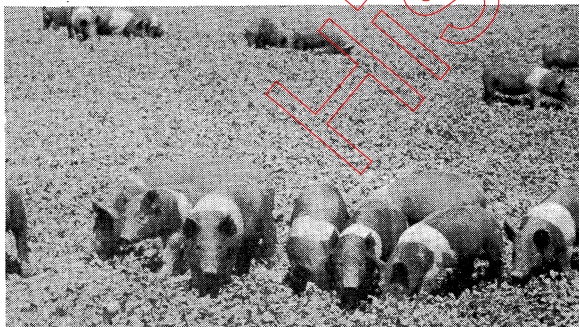
1. Sows -- 2 litters per year -- feeder pigs sold

A good farrowing house is needed, possibly a remodeled barn with built-in stalls or pens and concrete floor, heated in winter. More labor than capital is utilized; feed requirements are low. Animal husbandry skills are needed to save pigs and produce healthy 50-pound feeder pigs at weeks. There's a ready market for good pigs.



2. Sows -- 2 litters per year -- pigs raised

A hog program with requirements similar to feeder pig production except that more corn and additional feeding facilities are required. Need more good land for corn production, more capital investment, less labor.



3. Purchase feeder pigs to feed out

Least labor and most capital required of the three programs. Large amounts of home-grown corn needed to convert into pork. Can be highly automated with investment in modern facilities. Large volume operations needed since net return per animal is small.



Just as with hogs, one of three alternative beef programs may fit the part-time farm.

#### 4. Beef cows

Beef cow herds belong on farms with large quantities of low-cost forage. Forage can come from several different sources:

- Improved grass pasture-fescue, orchard grass, brome
- Rough land and "waste" land pasture
- Gleanings from cropland
- Wheat and oats pasture in fall and spring
- Low quality hay
- Cornstalks and corn cobs

Beef cows require as little labor and attention as any livestock. No buildings and little equipment is needed, but investment in cows and land can be substantial.

Costs must be kept to a minimum for gross returns are low. The size of the enterprise is not critical, but several cows are needed before profits begin to add up. Ready markets available for good, early winter calves sold the following fall.

#### 5. Beef cows -- calf fed out

Similar to raising feeder calves except calves are fed to higher weights. Requires more corn and more facilities. May be difficult to get enough, uniform calves together in lots for fattening and may pay to sell feeder calves and buy back uniform lots for feeding. Calves are usually grass fed with some corn fed at heavier weights. Heavy hay feeding not as profitable as corn silage for larger cattle. Feeding to slaughter weights not recommended for home raised calves.





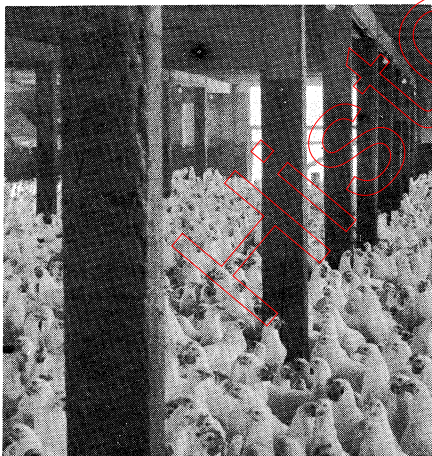
#### 6. Feeder steer and heifers fed out

Just as in purchasing feeder pigs to feed out, feeder cattle need big quantities of corn and preferably corn silage. In the fall, 400# calves can be given 3-5 pounds of grain per day in addition to silage or hay. The corn is gradually increased and the following summer the cattle are full fed in dry lot or fattened on pasture for sale in late fall or early winter.



#### 7. Sheep -- ewe flock and lambs raised

Sheep work out well on farms with small acreages of meadow crops and rough pasture. The requirements are similar to those for a beef cow herd except the enterprise can be smaller and still operate efficiently. Seventy-five to one hundred ewes could be fed from 30 acres of forage crops. The ewe flock generates income from two sources -- wool and sale of market lambs. Gross returns from sheep are not high, however and costs need to be held to a minimum. Capital investment is low, old buildings can be used for lambing and feeding.



#### 8. Laying hens, broilers and turkeys

These must be specialized, high volume operations. Returns per bird are small, particularly with broilers. Price fluctuations increase risk. Most part-time farmers should consider contracts with integrators to assure stable market, to get management help, reduce capital investment and to spread risk among several parties. Highly automated, high volume setups require a minimum of labor.



Several other, less common livestock enterprises are conducted by part-time farmers which fit special circumstances and interests:



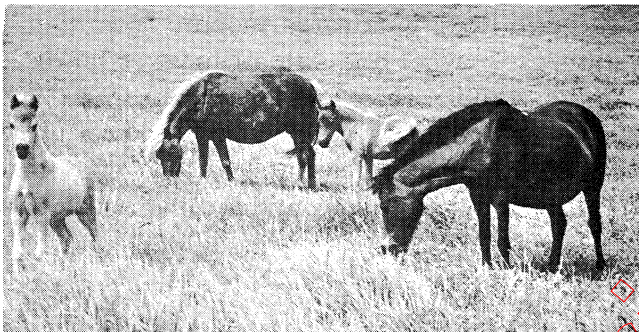
9. Raising dairy heifers for sale to commercial dairymen

Young heifer calves are purchased or contracted from dairymen. Bred heifers are sold into herds or operator is paid to raise calves. Requires considerable labor and skill, but not much capital or home grown feed.



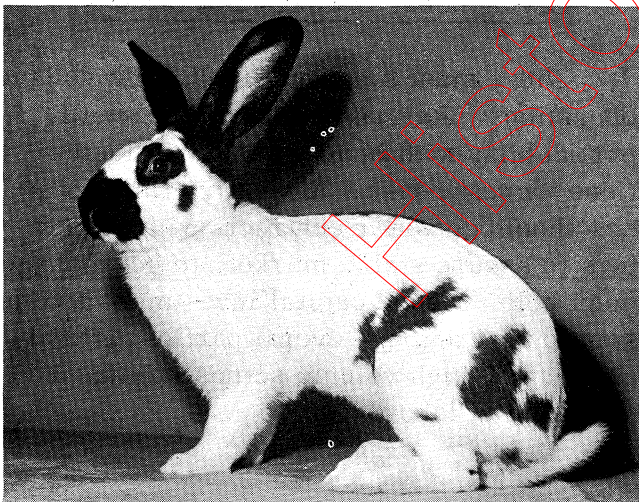
10. Purchase beef or dairy calves for resale to cattle feeders

Similar to raising dairy heifers. Young stock picked up of mixed origin, grown out on pasture and forage largely, then sold to feed lot operators for fattening.



11. Ponies and horses

A few part-time farm families have particular interests and skill with other kinds of animals. Profits would depend on special market arrangements and sufficient volume to lift the enterprise out of the hobby class.



12. Goats, rabbits and fur bearing animals

These special animal enterprises are not as common as others described earlier, but of the three, rabbit production is the most popular. Unusual skills and unique market outlets are needed. Capital investment in rabbits and goats can be modest and these enterprises fit on farms with considerable labor supply and not much land. Fur bearing animal production is concentrated in the hands of bigger operators producing for a distant market.



It is seldom advisable for the part-time farmer to have more than one livestock enterprise, unless the farm is quite large and family labor plentiful. Spare time labor devoted to livestock chores should be concentrated on one enterprise.

### OPERATING THE PART-TIME FARM

Practical suggestions can be made on the everyday operation of the part-time farm. Within each enterprise are production and marketing practices that save labor and boost profits. Here are a few:

#### Crop Production Practices

1. Minimum tillage - plow - planting of corn is a good way to reduce field preparation time and expense. Time is very valuable in planting season.
2. Chemical weed control - application of herbicides to field crops cuts down on need for cultivation and increases yields.
3. Bulk application of fertilizer - have fertilizer hauled and spread by local dealer.
4. Provide 8-10 months pasture program for cattle instead of harvesting all winter feed. --Depend on improved, permanent grass and legume pasture plus "salvage" pasture.

#### Livestock Production Practices -

1. Self feeding and automatic feeding and watering devices for livestock - Large hog feeders, self feeding hay and silage setups for cattle, automatic poultry equipment.
2. Round bales dropped in field for beef cows, etc. - fescue hay bales broken open in field during winter feeding season.
3. Slatted floors and manure cleanout systems - use labor saving manure disposal systems for hogs and poultry if costs can be held down. Slats can be home made.
4. Loose housing for cattle - build up manure pack over winter, save feeding labor by having cattle go to the stored feed rather than bringing feed to cattle.
5. Farrowing stalls and pens for sows - save more pigs per litter with less attention.
6. Artificial breeding - less labor and expense than keeping bull for small herd.

#### Machinery and Buildings

1. Own only the equipment used frequently and hire custom operators for the rest or rent equipment. Own tractor and basic tillage equipment for crops, equipment like manure spreader and manure scoop for livestock.

2. Use small machinery units and good used machinery.
3. Have machinery that family members can operate safely and easily.
4. Utilize present buildings with low cost remodeling if needed.
5. If new buildings needed, put up only flexible, multipurpose units.

### Marketing Practices

1. Consider marketing contracts for poultry and some other specialized enterprise. Negotiate contracts that guarantee stable market and discounts on feed purchased.
2. Use auction markets for sale of feeder pigs and feeder calves.
3. Develop special outlets for farm produce through direct consumer sale or direct to retailer.

Many more recommended practices could be listed that spell the difference between profit and loss on any farm, but these are practices that may have value on smaller, part-time operations.

A final suggestion: Few part-time farmers keep adequate farm records, even for tax purposes. Financial and production records are necessary to show costs and returns of the farm business, to indicate profit or loss. A simple farm record system should separate farm business items from family expenditures and off farm income. Spare time used in farm accounting and simple farm analysis is time well spent.