

University of Cambridge  
Department of Agriculture

Farm Economics Branch

Report No. 19

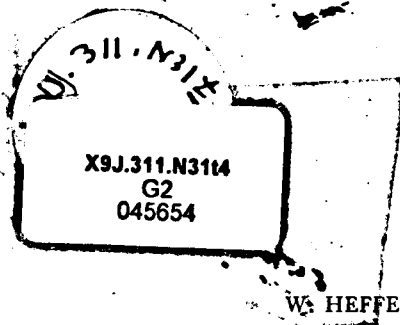
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983 farm  
survey



An Economic Survey of  
Agriculture in the Eastern  
Counties of England

1931



W. HEFFER & SONS Ltd., CAMBRIDGE

1932

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# CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
PREFACE - - - - -	v
<b>CHAPTER I</b>	
1. PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DISTRICT - - - - -	1
2. THE SAMPLE - - - - -	2
3. RELIABILITY OF DATA - - - - -	5
4. WEATHER CONDITIONS - - - - -	7
5. PRICES - - - - -	8
6. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS - - - - -	13
<b>CHAPTER II</b>	
GENERAL FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC DATA - - - - -	17
1. GENERAL AVERAGES - - - - -	17
2. SIZE GROUP AVERAGES - - - - -	20
3. LOCALITY GROUP AVERAGES - - - - -	23
<b>CHAPTER III</b>	
LIVESTOCK - - - - -	28
1. DAIRY ENTERPRISE - - - - -	29
2. HORNED STOCK - - - - -	34
3. PIGS - - - - -	35
4. SHEEP - - - - -	37
5. POULTRY - - - - -	38
6. HORSES - - - - -	40
<b>CHAPTER IV</b>	
CROPS - - - - -	42
1. WHEAT - - - - -	45
2. BARLEY - - - - -	47
3. OATS - - - - -	50
4. SUGAR BEET - - - - -	50
5. POTATOES - - - - -	52
6. HAY - - - - -	53
7. PERMANENT GRASS - - - - -	54

Contents—*continued.*

										<i>Page</i>	
CHAPTER V											
COSTS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	57
1. LABOUR	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	57
2. FEEDING STUFFS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	59
3. LIVESTOCK	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	61
4. RENT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	61
5. FERTILISERS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	62
6. SEED	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	64
7. MISCELLANEOUS COSTS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	65
CHAPTER VI											
MISCELLANEOUS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DATA	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	66
1. EQUIPMENT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	66
2. SIZE OF FIELDS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	67
3. DRAINAGE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	68
4. PRIVATE DRAWINGS IN KIND	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	69
5. VOCATIONAL EXPERIENCE OF OCCUPIER	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	70
6. CO-OPERATION	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	71
7. FARM ACCOUNTS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	71
CHAPTER VII											
FACTORS INFLUENCING PROFITABLENESS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	72
1. EFFICIENCY IN THE USE OF LABOUR	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	73
2. RATE OF CAPITAL TURNOVER	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	76
3. EFFICIENCY IN LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	77
4. VALUE OF OUTPUT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	78
5. INTERPRETATION OF FARM ACCOUNTS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	80
APPENDIX											
TABLE I.—Agricultural Statistics for Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Isle of Ely, and Huntingdonshire	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	84
TABLE II.—Economic and Financial Data (Size Groupings)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	85
TABLE III.—Economic and Financial Data (Locality Groupings)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	86
TABLE IV.—Miscellaneous Expenses	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	87
TABLE V.—Equipment and Miscellaneous Economic and Social Data	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	87
WEIGHTS FOR PRICE AND COST INDICES	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	88

## PREFACE

THIS is essentially an *interim* Report. It surveys the economic position of agriculture in the eastern counties of England during 1931, and is largely descriptive in character. It formulates no agricultural policy. It is mainly concerned in determining the nature and extent of the agricultural problem, and in providing the background of detail essential to constructive action.

The results of this investigation illustrate that agriculture, even in the eastern counties of England, assumes many forms, some with conflicting interests, and each variously affected by changes in price and cost levels. All farmers have experienced a narrowing of the margin between cost and income, although in certain districts and with certain types of farming the depression has been much more acute than in others. The data herein presented provide a basis for assessing the relative claims of the various sections of producers.

During the past six months conditions have altered considerably, and, on the whole, for the worse. Comparing the months January to June, 1932, with the same period in 1931, an increase of 18 per cent. in the cost of feeding stuffs and a decrease of 13 per cent. in the price of livestock and livestock products, has occurred. It is true that cereal prices have risen slightly (about 6 per cent.), and that, as a result of the *Wheat Act*, 1932, the current year's crop will realise a considerably higher figure than that of 1931. But it is probable that, on balance, the income of the majority of producers will be even less than last year. It is therefore important that developments should be carefully watched.

This investigation has a further object. In future business methods must enter more largely into the farmer's daily duties. The need for the elimination of waste, whether of labour, capital, or materials, entails the recording of transactions, and the preparation and intelligent interpretation of financial statements. Interpretation by the individual farmer of such statements will be facilitated by a knowledge of the most important business factors influencing profits, and of standards of measurement for these factors. At the present time the development of a technique of this nature is particularly urgent.

It remains only to give grateful acknowledgement first to those farmers (more than 1,000 in all) who so willingly and courteously contributed the information on which this study is based, and secondly to the recorders whose arduous duty it was to collect the data. In this connection the co-operation of the Agricultural Organisers of the various counties must be specially mentioned, particularly that of Mr. J. Hunter-Smith (Hertfordshire), Mr. J. C. Leslie (Essex), and Mr. J. A. McMillan (Cambridgeshire), who, with their staffs, collected no less than one-quarter of the total farm records secured. But for this material assistance the study would have been much less comprehensive.

The following gentlemen assisted in the recording:—<sup>1</sup>R. McG. Carslaw,  
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*July, 1932.*

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**“The purposes of scientific investigation in social science is the production of data which logical reasoning can apply to, and use in, the conduct of human affairs.”**

**J. C. COBB.**