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COMPETITION AMONG GRAINS

By
N. JASNY



**FOOD RESEARCH INSTITUTE
STANFORD UNIVERSITY, CALIFORNIA**

FOOD RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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To Phil

DIRECTOR'S PREFACE

Competition pervades economic life. It is fashionable today to stress the fact that competition is not pure and perfect, as writers on economic theory have often assumed for purposes of analysis, and to concentrate attention on imperfect or monopolistic competition. In historic time there have been changes in the degree to which competition has fallen short of perfection, and disputes rage over the trends. Most of this discussion, however, has dealt with competition among business concerns producing or marketing equivalent or similar commodities. Too little has been devoted to another important type: *inter-commodity competition*. This is probably now more vigorous than ever before. If it were given due weight, some current convictions regarding the drift toward monopolistic competition might undergo considerable modification.

This book deals with such inter-commodity competition, chiefly among the five grains which include all those of major importance except rice. It is concerned with their competition for various uses and for factors of production, under a great variety of conditions and circumstances. It seeks to disclose not only the fundamental factors involved in this competition among the grains, and their relative importance, but also the widely varying results as brought about by the combined effect of those factors in the different regions of the temperate zones of the Occidental world.

The work has evolved from a dream of the author. Naum Jasny's valuable experience in Russia, Germany, and the United States, and his familiarity with literature relevant to the present topic in all three languages, put him in an exceptionally favorable position to deal with its broad range in subject matter and geographical area. The Food Research Institute welcomed the opportunity to help translate the dream into achievement. While living in Germany, Dr. Jasny was for some years correspondent of the Institute covering Rus-

sian and German aspects of the world grain situation. For us he wrote "Wheat Problems and Policies in Germany," published in *Wheat Studies*, October 1935. The present book was written mainly while he held a temporary appointment as a staff member during most of 1938.

Most obviously the book will be of interest to agronomists, especially cerealists, for the attempted integration of findings in their field in the broad setting in which these are presented. Since few studies throw so much light upon the problem of geographical distribution of the world's important grain crops, it is clearly pertinent also to students of geography, particularly in its economic and agricultural aspects. It deserves to be read not only by agricultural economists and by students of marketing, but by economic theorists who do not shrink from taking realities adequately into account. Based on a vast and scattered literature, with the wide knowledge of the author supplemented and checked by others with general or specific knowledge on various phases, it has large significance not only for specialists but for "generalists."

The magnitude of the task largely accounts for the length of the book, in spite of persistent efforts to keep its scope within reasonable limits and painstaking pruning of the manuscript at successive stages. In part also the length is due to a desire to make the contents accessible to more than the specialists in the several aspects dealt with. Most of Parts I and IV, for example, will be found intelligible and interesting by those who may not care to follow the detail presented in Parts II and III and the Appendix.

Inevitably such a ground-breaking work will contain errors as well as gaps. Both the author and the Institute will welcome corrections, criticisms, and suggestions toward improvement, as well as additional literature on points covered herein.

JOSEPH S. DAVIS

September 30, 1939

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

When this study was begun early in 1937, it was obvious that to accomplish it all by myself would be a very difficult, if not impossible, task. I was therefore very happy when I secured the co-operation of the Food Research Institute, with which I have been in contact for more than a decade. Aside from technical help and publication, the arrangement insured the consultation and active help of the members of the Institute staff, whose manifold backgrounds and interests contributed desired safeguards against gaps in knowledge and one-sidedness of judgment on my part.

The study in fact became far more an institutional work than any other that I have written. Additional, especially the very important qualifying, information; criticism of the content and form; suggestions for inclusions, omissions, reworking—all this was generously offered by the various staff members, to whom my sincerest gratitude is extended.

M. K. Bennett, Karl Brandt, and J. S. Davis heartily cooperated in all phases of the work, and Helen C. Farnsworth in the stages preceding revision, and for this reason their specific contributions cannot be pointed out. Dr. Bennett and Dr. Davis in addition lent a great deal of assistance in preparing the manuscript for the printer, carefully going over it more than twice and giving attention to every detail. Holbrook Working was a helpful consultant where price analysis was involved. V. P. Timoshenko read most of the final draft and made valuable suggestions.

Jean Hoover Ballou, my principal statistical and secretarial assistant, possesses a sense of responsibility rarely found but the more appreciated. The original charts are almost wholly the work of P. Stanley King, in plan, final make-up, and all; my own part in the preparation of some was even limited to supplying the basic material. Others, especially Elizabeth Brand Taylor, contributed in both different and similar ways—different with regard to the type of help sup-

plied and similar with regard to their unfailing willingness and friendliness.

The co-operation of the staff members is associated with my individual responsibility for the whole book. Individual responsibility is a potent means of stimulating productive effort; the study nevertheless would be materially inferior if I had been thrown upon my own resources.

To many other persons in the United States and abroad, I am greatly indebted for information, criticism, and suggestions. B. B. Bayles, Agronomist in the Bureau of Plant Industry, U.S. Department of Agriculture; J. S. Cole, Senior Agronomist, Division of Dry Land Agriculture in the same bureau; and L. E. Call, Director of the Agricultural Experiment Station of Kansas, who read Part II and made valuable suggestions. Major assistance affecting subordinate sections is acknowledged in the body of the study.

In 1937 I was able to obtain for another study a grant-in-aid from the Social Science Research Council which made possible a personal inspection of important agricultural regions of the United States. The principal outlines of the present study were at that time already developed, and the trip proved of great value for it.

N. J.

September 1, 1939

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