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Research in Farm Management

--Scope and Method--

Prepared under the direction of
**The Advisory Committee on Social
and Economic Research in
Agriculture**

JOHN D. BLACK, Editor
H. R. TOLLEY, Executive Secretary
of Special Advisory Committee
on Farm Management

SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH COUNCIL

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report represents the joint effort of a large number of the experienced research workers in Farm Management in the United States. Many who have not contributed to its preparation failed to avail themselves of an opportunity to do so for lack of time or other reasons. A special advisory committee was designated by the Advisory Committee on Social and Economic Research in Agriculture to decide upon the general outline of this report and to approve it for publication.

In the preparation of the outline a considerable number of research workers in addition to the members of the Special Advisory Committee were consulted. The Chairman and Executive Secretary of this Special Advisory Committee solicited the assistance of the various workers who have contributed to the report, and performed the task of fitting together their contributions and filling in the gaps. The name of the principal contributor is indicated at the beginning of each section of the report.

Among the Farm Management workers in the United States are some conflicting points of view with respect to the organization of research in the field and the research technique best suited to specific projects. These points of view are not all discussed fully in this report, largely owing to the fact that some workers did not avail themselves of the opportunity to present their points of view.

At various places in the report the Chairman and the Executive Secretary have endeavored by footnotes and otherwise to indicate points on which there are conflicting views and to refer to articles and publications containing discussions of or exemplifying points of view and methods of attack differing from those presented herein.

The final manuscript of this report has been submitted for criticism and comment to all members of the Committee, but some have not found time to read and comment on all of the projects. Dr. Holmes would no doubt have indicated definite disagreement with more of the projects could he have found time to do so. Dr. Myers has indicated this by stating that "he is in hearty disagreement with the point of view and many of the details of a considerable number of the proj-

ects". In some cases, this disagreement is indicated in footnotes attached to individual projects.

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USES OF THIS REPORT

This report is No. 13 in a series on "Scope and Method" of research in the various sub-fields of agricultural economics and rural sociology. This series of reports is part of a program of assistance to research in these fields, upon which the Advisory Committee on Social and Economic Research in Agriculture set forth in 1925 under instruction from the Social Science Research Council. Each report will undertake to outline the research of some sub-field of agricultural economics or rural sociology and then discuss the problems in methodology that are peculiar to it. The outline of any sub-field will be in large part in terms of a listing and discussion of specific research projects that have been undertaken or might be undertaken. Hence the discussion of methodology will be largely in terms of specific projects.

It is expected that these reports will be useful in the following ways: First, directors of experiment stations and chiefs of divisions of agricultural economics and of rural sociology in land-grant institutions in the United States, and persons similarly responsible for direction of the research in agricultural economics and rural sociology in other types of institutions, will find the outlines of the various sub-fields of much help in laying out continuing programs of research for their institutions. Second, individual research workers, graduate students looking for thesis subjects, and teachers conducting research seminars, as well as the agencies above named, will find the listing and discussions of projects helpful in choosing suitable research projects. Third, the descriptions of research already done will save research workers from duplicating other work and help them to find a way of building upon it successfully. Fourth, the discussion of the nature of a project and the qualitative background will reveal the body of the subject-matter which needs to be mastered for its intelligent prosecution, and the difficulties involved, and thus save many research workers from launching forth upon projects for which they have not yet qualified themselves, or which may be too difficult for all but the chosen few. Fifth, the analysis of methodology will furnish a basis for a more intelligent decision as to the procedures and methods which will lead to valid and usable results. Sixth, the discussion of methodology will also suggest helpful devices in technique and details of procedure that might not otherwise be brought to the attention of the research workers. Seventh, the discussions of both scope and methods will make clear to those organizing research in any field the contributions which workers on different subjects have to offer to it, and point the way to the form of collaboration needed.

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