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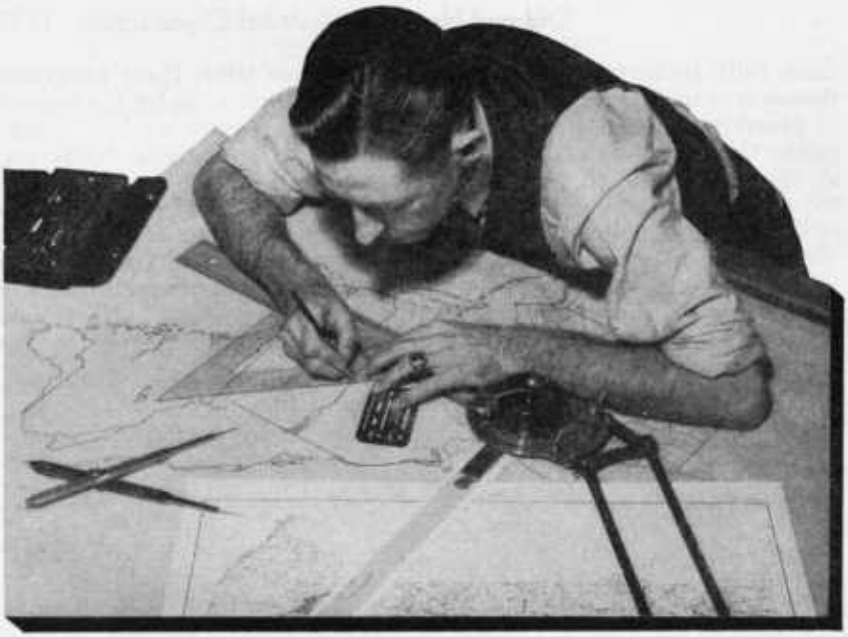

Cooperative Land Use Planning—A New Development in Democracy

by ELLERY A. FOSTER and HAROLD A. VOGEL[1]

A MOVEMENT in democracy about which most people know very little is under way in the rural areas throughout the United States. It goes under the name of "county land use planning," but it is already becoming much more than this name implies—first, because it extends down to all the small local communities in the county; second, because it is not confined to land use but takes in educational conditions, medical care, and a host of other things that are important in each community. The movement is only in its early stages at present, but it goes back to democratic traditions deeply rooted in our early history. It is an effort, in fact, to vitalize these traditions in terms of modern life. Many people believe that it may turn out in the long run to be the most important agricultural development of the past few years—more important than any specific program. Here is the story in brief.

DEMOCRATIC PLANNING TO MEET NEW NEEDS

IN THE difficult years since 1918, the farmers of the United States have concluded that the democratic way of attacking their common

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problems was by common action, and that the Federal Government was one agency through which such cooperative action could be accomplished. But prerequisite to action are plans. State legislatures made some of the first such plans and passed them as laws. Among them were mortgage moratoria, which took the place of the shotguns peace-loving farmers in some sections had begun using to prevent foreclosures. In the national sphere, the Congress authorized broad new programs for agriculture and made Federal agencies directly responsible for their administration.

Early in the administration of these new programs, the agencies in charge recognized that farmers should take part in planning how the programs should be carried out in each community. Consultation with the farmers was necessary to determine the facts of each local situation and to obtain agreement on the adjustments needed and the local program for carrying them out.

Some of the agencies encouraged the organization of farmer committees to plan with the program administrators. Good results followed this move. For example, when local people objected because a certain forest purchase program involved planting some cleared land to trees, the local administrator went to the township board. He said, "If you agree that some of the lands in the township ought to be developed for forestry, will you make a plan for doing it? Will you take a map and color in the lands you believe should be in forest? You can use another color to show the lands you think should be used for farming, and if there are lands you are in doubt about, show them in a third color." The administrator then supplied the board with a map showing the roads and the existing settlement of the township.

The township supervisors were farmers who knew the lands in their town that were good for farming and those where farming had been tried and had failed. They made the plan. They even marked on the map some farms that were in isolated, cut-over areas and suggested that the farmers there ought to move to the more settled parts of the country. One of the town-board members himself was on such a farm, and he agreed it would be better for him and for the town if he moved nearer to his neighbors. On the basis of the plan thus developed, the Government agency traded off some of the land it had bought for isolated farms in the forest area. The families from these farms were thus enabled to get farms nearer to neighbors and to schools, churches, and markets, and the community benefited by reduced costs of schools, school-bus service, and road maintenance. The forestry program, in turn, was able to go ahead, restoring forests on land that local people agreed should be in forest.

This is only one of many instances in which an administrative agency found that their plans worked best when local representatives played a large part in making them and in deciding how the program was to be carried out, when action was to be taken, and how rapidly the adjustments were to be carried to completion.

Planning for each program separately, however, even with the fullest participation of local people, was not fully effective in coordinating different programs with each other and with local conditions. Moreover, coordination of action obviously meant coordination of planning. Not only the Department but the cooperating State agencies—land-

grant colleges and others—as well as farmers, felt this need for coordinated, cooperative planning. Land use planning as it now operates is meeting these fundamental requirements.

COOPERATIVE PLANNING ON A COUNTY BASIS

After much consideration and discussion by people experienced in earlier types of agricultural planning, the Department and the State agricultural colleges agreed that the logical organization for coordinated planning should consist of farmers, administrators, and technicians working together. The county was chosen as a major unit of this cooperative planning because it was realized that the work must be done by people close to the local situation and because much of the agricultural work was already organized on a county basis.

The area method was adopted as the simplest and most practical approach to so complex a planning problem. Most counties have several kinds of areas. In some most of the land is fertile and arable, while in others most of it is poor. Some are thickly settled and others sparsely settled; some have little soil erosion, while in others erosion is severe. There are mountainous or hilly areas, rolling and flat areas. One area has one type of farming, a neighboring area a different type, and each has problems that differ from the others. It was believed that a common understanding and agreement on the location and characteristics of these different land use areas would provide a good starting point for coordinated planning.

After agreeing on the location and general characteristics of a land use area, the next step is to agree on the problems and the type of adjustment needed. This means determining, among other things, whether the present use of the land is the best use. Is the land being managed in the most effective way? What kind of adjustment, if any, is needed? Agreement must be reached on the particular adjustments needed for each area. In one area the major need may be a change in farm organization, perhaps requiring credit aids and technical advice to assist the farmers in making the change. In another it may be greater emphasis on soil conservation. In yet another it may be improved forest management to help support the people and their local institutions. Retirement of submarginal farms and aid to people in finding new opportunities may be needed elsewhere. In many cases a combination of several different kinds of adjustment might be needed in the same land-use area.

It was decided to undertake this cooperative planning in such a way that the land use plans for different counties would be comparable and could be put together or summarized for purposes of district, State, regional, and national planning. This meant agreeing on a common procedure that could be adapted to local conditions.

The broad outlines of such cooperative activities were incorporated formally into an agreement on July 8, 1938, between two committees that had been set up to study the problem, one representing the Association of Land Grant Colleges and the other the Department of Agriculture. The agreement was drawn at a conference of the two committees at Mount Weather, Va., and is known as the Mount Weather Agreement.

The general conclusion reached at Mount Weather was to develop a State land use committee in each State and to organize similar committees in the different counties. The Mount Weather Agreement was a starting point for working out individual cooperative land use planning agreements between the land-grant colleges and the Department. With minor variations, these agreements are much the same in all the 45 States that entered into them the first year. The work is organized with a State land use planning or advisory committee and county and community committees in each county where the process has been started. In the Department the planning organization includes the Agricultural Program Board and the Interbureau Coordinating Committee, which is composed of representatives of all Department of Agriculture agencies. (See Old and New in Agricultural Organization, p. 1125.)

The State committee is set up to develop State agricultural plans and programs and to advise and assist the county committees. The State director of agricultural extension serves as chairman of the State committee, and the State representative of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics is secretary. In addition to these officials and a group of representative farm men and women, the membership of the committees includes representatives of State and Department agencies which have responsibility for the management of land-use programs. These agencies include the agricultural experiment station, Agricultural Adjustment Administration, Farm Security Administration, Soil Conservation Service, Farm Credit Administration, Public Roads Administration, Forest Service, and State forestry department. In addition, in many States the State highway department, State conservation department, and other State agencies are represented.

The community and county committees develop plans for communities and counties. They also work directly with administrative and policy-making agencies in translating the plans into action. In an ideal organization of a community committee, the individual members represent all the different neighborhoods in the community. A county committee is normally composed of representatives from the different communities, together with local representatives of agricultural agencies. The county agricultural agent serves as secretary.

As the planning work develops, nearly every land-use committee finds that it has several outstanding problems that demand special attention. Frequently these are referred to appropriate subcommittees for detailed study and analysis.

The planning organization does not end with the committees. Its real foundation is the people of the different neighborhoods and communities. The people who are not members of planning committees take part through public meetings at which the committees report what they have been doing and free discussion is encouraged. They participate, too, through individual discussions with committee members in the course of frequent personal contacts.

STAGES OF "COUNTY PLANNING"

The planning work has been organized in three progressive stages. The first is preparatory work, which includes the organizing of com-

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mittees. The second stage is intensive planning work in studying problems, agreeing on facts, and deciding upon goals and objectives for the improvement of agriculture and of rural life in the different land use areas in the county. The third and last stage is cooperating to decide specifically what will be done, and by whom, to achieve the goals and objectives; this stage aims to develop a unified program of action by all agencies concerned with agriculture in the county.

In the preparatory stage, public meetings are held, and the whole idea is talked over. Preparatory work should include a review and study of the information available for use in planning, of the various public programs now operating to assist agriculture, and of regional and national forces and trends that have a bearing on local problems. The public meetings are particularly helpful because cooperative planning relies heavily upon open discussion as a means of reaching understanding and agreement on what the problems are and what should be done about them.

The farmer representatives on the planning committee are sometimes elected at these meetings. Again, names are suggested by nominating committees. Occasionally the members are appointed. As planning work progresses, more and more committees are elected in order to assure a representative organization. Representative committees are essential if the planning is to be democratic and if the committees' recommendations are to have general support.

The opinions and attitudes of each neighborhood and community should be fully represented in the membership of community and county committees. Committee members should be men and women of broad vision, with a high sense of public responsibility and a genuine concern for the needs and viewpoints of all groups in the community. They must have the ability to work together in a democratic way, which means respecting the judgment of others and recognizing that intelligent compromise is an essential part of democracy. They must also be able to see and understand the interdependence of communities and of counties and to appreciate how an action that appears desirable from a purely local point of view may prove undesirable because of national and regional forces and conditions.

Ideally, the actual development of land use plans—the area method of planning—is not started until after thorough preparatory work. This is begun by studying and reaching an agreement on the significant land use areas of the county. The work is normally done by community committees whose members are familiar with local conditions. Each community committee uses a large-scale base map of the community showing the roads, farms, schools, towns, rivers, lakes, and similar features. In addition, it has other data and maps which have been assembled and reviewed in the preparatory stage.

Frequently several community committees meet together at a central point, each discussing and drawing on its base map the land use areas it considers significant for planning purposes in its territory. As the work progresses, the community committees check with each other to reconcile differences so that the community maps and recommendations for changes in land use will fit together on a county basis. When in doubt concerning any area, committee members often go out and examine it. Available data on physical features, economic factors,

and social conditions are used for reference in drawing the area boundaries, in studying the local problems, and in reaching conclusions on needed adjustments. The knowledge and experience of farmers likewise supplies an important part of the basis for the agreements that are reached in this important stage of planning.

Specific adjustments needed in different areas are likewise determined by discussions in the committee. Farm-management advisers, tax experts, foresters, and other specialists participate and supply any useful data they may have available.

When a community committee has agreed on the different land use areas, the essential facts and problems of each, and the specific adjustments that may be needed, the map and a brief report are submitted to the county committee. The county group reviews and assembles the reports of the community committees, combining the community maps in a county land use map. Areas suitable, unsuitable, and questionable for farm use are classified and shown on the county map in different colors. Questions are frequently referred back to community committees for further consideration.

When the work has progressed to a stage where the county committee feels it is ready to have its findings and recommendations assembled and presented in report form, the county agent, with the assistance of committee members and of technicians from cooperating State and Federal agencies, prepares a working draft for a report. This is considered by the committee as a whole. Copies are sent to the State committee for comments and suggestions. Then, when the county committee has received the various suggestions and has agreed on any revisions that it desires to make, the report is reproduced and distributed to the committee members, the State agencies, and the Department of Agriculture as a basis for the next stage—getting action on the recommendations.

Unless there were definite arrangements for translating plans into action, there would be danger that the planning process might result largely in maps and recommendations, with little actual progress in getting things done to help farmers deal with their problems. Proposals for specific action are therefore formulated by the committees.

Since representatives of many of the action agencies are actually members of the county committee, they are in a position to cooperate closely. If the local administrator of a program agrees that what the committee recommends is desirable, and if the action is within his power, he goes ahead with it. If the decision must be made by a higher official, the local representative refers the proposal to him for approval or disapproval. If he approves, he is asked to propose steps for carrying out the proposed action; if not, to suggest modifications.

Various lines of action which appear to the committees to be desirable for individual farmers are explained and discussed at public meetings and in personal talks of committee members with their neighbors. Committee reports and recommendations, reproduced and distributed widely among local farm people, are proving very useful in developing a better understanding of common problems and of practical ways to meet them.

This process of translating plans into coordinated action throughout a county is known as unified program development. It does not

mean centralized administration under one head. Rather it means agreement upon desirable changes in the different programs so that each may contribute most fully to achieving the needed adjustments; administration of the unified programs is still carried out by separate agencies. Nor does the cooperative planning effort lessen the need for advisory committees to work on administrative problems with individual agencies, such as the county agricultural conservation program committee, the Farm Security advisory committee, and others. It provides a local organization with which these administrative committees can work on problems requiring coordinated action.

As a beginning, it was proposed to carry out the unified-program idea in one county in each State. This concentration of effort in a few counties, it was believed, would help to indicate in a reasonable length of time the type of accomplishment possible. In most States the work is now being started in a second county. In addition, other counties have been active in translating plans into action. Many of them likewise have decided upon definite things that should be done on the basis of their plans and have worked with the different agencies in getting them done.

In developing plans and in finding ways of putting them into action the committees have dealt with individual farmers and with agencies of local, State, and Federal Government. A large part of the action that has already resulted from this cooperative planning is carried out by local agencies—county commissioners, assessors, soil conservation district supervisors, vocational-agriculture teachers, health officers, and groups of farmers. Frequently several agencies—local, State, and Federal—are involved, each doing a particular part of the job and all cooperating. The county agent and the agricultural college are often called on to do the educational work needed as part of a unified program. Very commonly, on the recommendation of a planning committee, special research programs are set up to obtain facts and study particular problems. Specialists in various fields are enlisted from the colleges and universities, the Department of Agriculture, and other sources.

PROGRESS IN THE FIRST YEAR

One year after the new planning effort was started, 45 States had made definite arrangements for cooperating in it, and 43 had organized States committees, with a total of 552 farmer members. The activity had reached 1,120 counties in 47 States, and there were 70,000 farm men and women cooperating as members of county and community committees. These committees in 566 counties had carried on area mapping and classification work. In 112 of them a preliminary draft of area maps and reports had been completed. The development of unified programs had been undertaken in 46 counties in 40 States.

These figures show that the program has been inaugurated on a large scale. To determine the amount of progress being made, however, it is necessary to know what has happened in the counties where the work is being done and what success committees are having in obtaining action that helps improve local conditions. Space permits describing only a few selected experiences of committees.

Land Use Planning in Culpeper County, Va.

Broadening out its existing program of farmer planning for extension work, the County Board of Agriculture of Culpeper County, which is in the northern Piedmont section of Virginia, took the leadership in organizing 8 community committees, blanketing the county. The committees then mapped the county into 11 different land use areas and agreed on the following recommendations:

Areas 1, 2, 3. Primarily subsistence-farming areas with a relatively small acreage of the individual farms suited to tillage and the remainder of the land most useful as improved pasture and woodland.

Areas 4, 5. Mostly rough land. Considerable serious erosion. Best adapted to large farm units for livestock production.

Areas 6, 7. Rolling to steep land in use for general farming, dairying, and livestock production. Crop yields good, but there is need for soil conservation and improved farming practices, pasture improvement, and better marketing methods.

Area 8. Level to rolling land, above average in quality. Farms very large. It would be desirable to increase the number of farms and thus support on better land a number of farmers now occupying land unsuited to farming. Soil conservation also a need.

Area 9. Broken, badly eroded land, thickly settled and characterized by subsistence and part-time farming, with comparatively low crop yields. Further settlement should be discouraged; lands not suited to farming should be developed as forest, and efforts should be made to develop additional opportunities for employment off the farm.

Area 10. Sparsely settled, with small farms heavily wooded and on relatively poor soil, much of which is poorly drained. Needs in this area are for more supplemental income, increased utilization of idle land as pasture and forest, and more home production of family food supplies.

Area 11. Similar to area 10, except that the farms are larger. Incomes are low. Farming should be intensified on the small acreage of better lands, and the poorer lands should be developed and managed as forest.

Having agreed on these basic objectives, the committees turned to translating the numerous recommendations into action. The need for soil conservation practices in most of the land use areas led the committees to work for the establishment of a county-wide soil conservation district and for the location of a Civilian Conservation Corps camp there to provide labor for soil conservation work. Both of these objectives have been realized. The soil conservation program is now under way, with the committees taking an active part in developing it.

Realizing that many of their objectives could be attained only through closer correlation and cooperation between agricultural agencies, the county committee decided that one way to get the agencies to work together would be to have them housed together. Through the cooperation of the county board of supervisors, a building was obtained at the county seat in which all the agencies could have their offices.

One of the problems with people in the subsistence-farming areas who needed part-time work off the farm was that once such people got Works Progress Administration jobs they were reluctant to leave them to do seasonal farm work because of uncertainty as to whether they could get their jobs back afterward. An improved understanding was worked out with the county welfare office whereby needy families may take advantage of seasonal work demands and yet be assured of eligibility for relief when not employed on private jobs.

Many low-income farmers in the subsistence areas were found to need some form of aid that would enable them to improve their farms. Arrangements were worked out with the Farm Security Administration to make "prestandard" loans to such farmers. Another need of the low-income farmers was for more adequate low-cost medical service. A special committee on this problem has developed a tentative agreement with the Culpeper County Medical Society that provides a group medical-care program in which all of the doctors in the county will participate.

Many of the needs in Culpeper County required action by farmers to change farming practices, conserve soil, raise home food supplies, improve pastures, and take other measures. This meant getting the committee's recommendations before farmers in the different communities and neighborhoods. The committee decided that to do this it needed to know more about the actual neighborhoods and communities to which the different farmers felt they belonged. To obtain this knowledge, it enlisted the cooperation of the State agricultural college and the farm-population experts of the Department of Agriculture. The facts assembled and presented by these agencies are the basis for reorganizing community committees so that each neighborhood can be represented. The neighborhood representatives reach nearby farmers.

The Culpeper County committee feels that additional facts are needed on a number of different subjects before the soundest plans of action can be developed for some of its problems. To get some of the needed information it worked out a plan whereby the United States census officials would select especially qualified enumerators to tabulate the county census data in a special way to meet the needs of the planning committee. The State statistician and the State commissioner of agriculture cooperated by training the census enumerators to obtain the data in the form required by the committee.

These various measures in action programs, community and neighborhood organization, and the collection of additional facts represent the committee's efforts thus far to achieve the objectives it decided upon as the appropriate ones for the different land use areas and for the county at large. It can be seen that not all of the objectives have been achieved. Many of them cannot be achieved in a single year. Culpeper County is working on a long-range program, and the progress so far gives the community and county committees confidence that eventually they will accomplish much in improving conditions.

Land Use Planning in Ward County, North Dakota

Of the many counties from which a second example might be chosen, semiarid Ward County, N. Dak., is selected because of the sharp contrast of conditions there with those in humid Culpeper County. Ward County is in the northern spring-wheat area and was hard hit by drought in the 1930's.

Work of organizing the land use-planning committees was initiated by the county agricultural program-planning committee, which had been in existence for some time. This committee decided to subdivide the county into 12 community areas. Public meetings were

called in each community center to discuss the program and to elect a community committee. Every township was represented on the community committees, which were composed of 7 members in all communities except 1, which had 8 members. It was decided that the chairman of each community committee should automatically become a member of the county committee.

Cooperation was obtained from various agencies in supplying data to the committees for use in developing basic land use plans. The committees were furnished maps and data on soils, slope, soil erosion, tax delinquency, publicly owned lands, types of landownership, and assessed valuations of land parcels. Aerial photographs and tabulations of 1938 crop acreages for each township also were supplied. Using this information and their own knowledge of local conditions, the committees decided that the county, for practical planning purposes, consists of 23 distinct areas. After analyzing conditions in these different areas, 20 of them were grouped in 2 major classes: (1) Areas now in farms, recommended as suitable for general farming (67 percent of the land in the county); (2) areas now in farms, recommended as suitable for livestock farming (28 percent of the land). Of the remaining 3 areas, 1 is now in farms but is classed as questionable for farming, and 2 are Federal migratory waterfowl refuge areas covering 2 percent of the county.

The most pressing needs for adjustment were found to be largely centered in the areas of the second class, where overcapitalization and overtaxation result in an overemphasis on cash crops. A major need, the committees decided, was for greater emphasis on livestock. Factors designated as impeding this adjustment include absentee ownership, small size of farm units, and a shortage of capital for range improvement, fencing, livestock purchases, and reorganization of operating units. Problems of range management and soil and water conservation are important in these areas.

Many of the other problems in Ward County are virtually county-wide, applying to nearly all the land use areas. These include crop rotations and tillage methods poorly adapted to conditions in the county, periodic shortages of feed for livestock, short-term leases, overcapitalization, heavy debt burdens, inadequate farm buildings, inequitable distribution of the tax burden, heavy tax delinquency, and difficulty in financing local government. Another problem recognized was that of increasing the opportunities for recreation and social activities as a necessary part of modern life.

Obviously these complex problems called for a long-time program. With that in mind the committee turned to the development of a comprehensive set of recommendations for adjustments, involving local, State, and Federal agencies. For example, the recommendations on the tax problem suggest local action to adjust taxation to the productive power of the land; more stringent tax collections, including the impounding of rentals on tax-delinquent lands; and coordination of school programs to eliminate costly and inefficient small units. Recommended State action on the tax problem deals largely with revenues to local government from lands controlled by various State agencies, and with homestead tax exemption. Recommended Federal action to ease the tax problem involves payments on Federal lands in lieu of

taxes and Federal aid in providing school services to families located on a Federal homesteads resettlement project. A major objective of the committee's tax program is to distribute the total tax burden more equitably, on the basis of ability to pay.

A similarly broad program was outlined for achieving needed adjustments in land use. This includes action by individual farmers to use all available public aids in shifting to a greater dependence on livestock, through leasing tax-title lands, obtaining loans for fencing and development of stock water, and adjusting farm operations so as to produce sufficient feed crops and bring the land on every farm into its best use. The program also calls for a number of changes in the local application of the agricultural adjustment program, to increase emphasis on feed and forage crops and make broader provisions for summer-fallow practices.

Recommendations for action in several other fields were developed as part of the county's long-time program. With two-thirds of the farms in the county tenant-operated, the committee saw tenancy as one of its most important problems. To deal with this, it recommended long-term leases developed to fit the individual farm and asked for continued purchase of farms for tenants through the Farm Security Administration program. To relieve a serious situation caused by heavy debt loads on farmers, it recommended that the debt-adjustment service of the Farm Security Administration be expanded in the county. Another recommendation was that Government credit agencies develop a program to unify under one agency all debts owed to Federal agencies and to provide for amortizing the combined debts over a period of years. Increased efforts to obtain more effective price adjustments for crops, the expansion of farmer cooperatives, and development of suitable tax-deed lands for outdoor recreation are among the other recommendations.

With this broad list of objectives, the committee began the task of getting action. Among the first arrangements worked out was the agreement of the local taxing authorities to utilize the results of land use planning as a foundation for revising and adjusting assessed land valuations. Begun in 1939, this work is being continued in 1940. Another arrangement has been to obtain the aid of the State agricultural experiment station and the Bureau of Agricultural Economics in analyzing the school situation and farm-debt conditions to provide a basis for considering possible reorganization of the school system and for relating farm debts more closely to the earning power of the land. Arrangements worked out with various agencies for obtaining other action as part of a unified program include definite commitments from the county commissioners, county superintendent of schools, county treasurer, Ward County Welfare Board, Farmers' Union of Ward County, the Governor of North Dakota, Farm Security Administration, Extension Service, and Bureau of Biological Survey.

Coordination in Teton County, Mont.

In Teton County, Mont.—out where the Great Plains meet the northern Rocky Mountains—one of the things the committee determined in developing a basic plan was that 20,000 acres of land then in wheat were really unsuited for that crop. The average yield was

less than 5 bushels an acre. Other land, equally poor, also was believed in danger of similar unwise development. After studying the history of the area and the prospects for wheat growing, the committee decided that the land should be resodded and used for grazing and that all similar land should be kept out of cultivation.

That was the general objective. The next step was to accomplish it, and the first part of the job was to find out what agencies could help and in what ways. The committee conferred with each agency in turn on what it could do and, mostly through the agency representatives on the committee itself, developed a program in which six different agencies have agreed on definite actions that each will perform.

The Agricultural Adjustment Administration offered to cooperate in several ways—for example, by not allowing low-grade sod lands to come into the A. A. A. program as cropland. It will also encourage the retirement and reseeding of low-grade lands now in wheat.

The Farm Security Administration will work with its clients in getting the poor land out of wheat and in keeping poor land now in grass from going into wheat, and will help farmers on small units to get enough additional acreage to make a unit of sufficient size.

The Farm Credit Administration is testing out the feasibility of loans to permit enlargement of units that are too small and will consider land productivity carefully before extending loans so as not to encourage farming on submarginal land.

The Montana State Land Department will discourage wheat growing on the submarginal land it controls, will endeavor to get the poor land into grazing use, and will encourage reseeding by lowering rental charges to renters who reseed the land.

Teton County is undertaking a comprehensive program of reclassifying lands for tax purposes which aims at lower assessments of submarginal wheat lands if they are used for grazing and higher assessments when they are used for wheat. Adjusting the use of county-owned land is another aim in the program.

The county extension agent will direct extension work toward informing people about the program and enlisting the cooperation of local and nonresident landowners.

Other Values of Cooperative Planning

These examples indicate how cooperative planning unites farmers and agencies through common goals and how they operate as a team in achieving objectives. Similar results have been attained in a broad field of activities, including conservation, health, location of public services and facilities, carrying out State and local government policies, and educational programs. Formation of State and local government policies also has been facilitated through work of the committees.

A primary need in many cases was the fitting of programs to local conditions and to each other. Experience thus far shows that this is accomplished to a large extent through cooperatively developed basic plans. For example, highway agencies have been quick to utilize the land use plans as a guide for farm-to-market road programs. In fact the interest of highway agencies in these plans has led them

to give substantial assistance to the planning committees. One of their major contributions is the large-scale maps used by many committees in mapping land use areas. These highway base maps show not only the existing roads but the location of farms, schools, towns, rivers, lakes, and other features, on a scale well suited to the committees' use. Guidance in placing new schools and in locating rural electrification lines is among the other important functions served by land use plans.

The cooperative planning process has proved of major value, too, in aiding extension work aimed directly at the specific problems in different areas. Special committees have been formed in a number of agricultural colleges to help redirect extension activities in the light of land use plans developed in the counties. County agents are consulting regularly with county and community committees in fitting extension programs to the objectives developed in land use planning.

One of the major contributions of planning to education is through the duplication and distribution of the planning committees' reports among farm people. The community meetings which are held to consider the committees' findings are of course educational in a high degree. The planning process itself is an educational experience for those who engage in it. Even the highly trained technician gains by seeing his own specialty as part of a local situation and learning how the many different subjects fit together in given local situations.

Another link between land use planning and education is the use of county planning reports in the public schools. In Kansas the agricultural teachers are receiving planning reports as soon as completed. In Belmont County, Ohio, the agricultural teacher is using the land use map and report in an adult education course. In Florida representatives of the State board of education are advocating that land use planning reports be utilized in the public-school curriculums. In Washington the agricultural teachers are helping to develop a revised course of study that will stress land use planning in the rural high schools. A number of State supervisors of agricultural education are planning to offer special courses on the philosophy and techniques of land use planning at their regular summer conferences for teachers of vocational agriculture.

Private Action on Common Problems

Joint private action to achieve agreed-upon goals and objectives may, in the long run, be a more significant result of the cooperative planning process than the coordination and unification of public programs, which was the initial purpose. Of course, it is nothing new for farmers to act together in doing things which cannot be done by the individual farmer acting alone, or which can be done more sociably by working together. In the early days farm people worked together in such things as logrollings and corn huskings. In more recent times there have been neighborhood threshing rings and cooperative creameries.

Planning together, in community and county committees, and later discussing the committees' findings and recommendations in community and neighborhood meetings and across fences lead to agreement

on various things. Many of these things are in fields where Government action is needed. Many other objectives and goals, however, though too big for individual action, can be achieved by the joint action of local people with little or no Government assistance. For example, there is a need in many communities for purebred sires to replace inferior and scrub sires. Frequently, no individual farmer is in a position to own a really good sire. Commonly also, farms are too small to justify the individual ownership and use of power equipment, such as a tractor. Yet if a tractor or other equipment could be shared among several farms it might be a thoroughly economical investment. These problems obviously require some kind of joint action. For instance, agreement is frequently reached that one of the farmers in a community will buy a purebred sire and that the other farmers will contribute to the cost, through service charges or in some other way. A tractor can be obtained under a similar arrangement, or a cooperative association may be formed to buy and own it and to coordinate its use among the individual members. Many local groups have obtained purebred sires and tractors in this way. Often they have been aided by credit extended by the Farm Security Administration.

Numerous examples could be cited in which county planning has led to group or cooperative action of this type. In Uintah and Juab Counties, Utah, the work of planning committees led to the establishment of cooperative sawmills, enabling farmers to work together in getting out lumber for their own use. In Pend Oreille County, Wash., the planning committee has arranged for rental of a privately owned bulldozer for use in land clearing. Group purchases of farm supplies and livestock, establishment of cold-storage locker plants, and cooperative marketing are among the other kinds of joint private action to achieve definite objectives agreed upon in such county planning.

LOOKING AHEAD WITH COUNTIES AND COMMUNITIES

Cooperation by farmer committeemen, technicians, and representatives of agricultural agencies in developing common basic plans and determining how the plans are to be effectuated is new. It will be successful to the extent that farmers take an active interest in the work and responsibility for it. Farmers must help decide on the best ways to obtain the general planning and coordination needed for agricultural programs. This involves, for one thing, the broadening out of the planning activity to include counties that have not yet started it. Even more important is continued and sustained effort after it is started, for planning is a continuing process. The problems with which it deals are constantly changing. Out of the planning process itself there must evolve leadership that is increasingly competent to deal with problems and increasingly skilled in the democratic process of reaching a mutual agreement on what is to be done.

Many of the major problems of our times are agricultural or affect agriculture. Our country is "on the spot" to show that it can deal with its problems in a democratic and civilized way and do it better than the nations that have abandoned democracy. Democracy cannot survive in the modern world unless it solves the problems of farmers

without land who lack opportunity and of all citizens who are overburdened with rent, interest, and taxes or are unable to make ends meet because of low incomes and high costs. Nor can it succeed unless there are economic and social opportunities for young people and means available for the common man to have a good life and the security that is made possible by science in the modern world. Cooperative land use planning is a means of attacking such of these problems as belong to agriculture.

It may be argued that planning by counties and communities cannot get at some of the larger agricultural problems, such as price parity, foreign markets, and the relation of effective to potential demand for farm products. It is true, of course, that all of the planning that is needed for agriculture cannot be done in the counties and communities. Some of the broader planning has to be done by State land use committees, State legislatures, the Congress of the United States, and the United States Department of Agriculture.

It is also true that many of the things farm people should have cannot be obtained through programs for agriculture alone. For example, additional alternative opportunities are needed for rural young people whose work is not required for farming and who do not desire to stay on farms.

Although agriculture is vitally concerned with these larger problems that cannot be solved within the county and community alone or within agriculture alone, the broad approach of the committees to their problems helps even in these cases. Problems are threshed out, ideas are formulated, and the State and national policies and plans are carefully checked, to see whether they improve the situation locally.

Local planning also helps in understanding the exact nature of basic problems. For example, the committees find many land use areas that have more people than the land can support in current production operations. This is one of the most frequent findings of county planning committees. Mechanization has made the family-size commercial farm unit larger than formerly, which means there would be fewer farms under an ideal program of commercial farming. In addition, many people have crowded onto cheap, poor land for subsistence farming because good land or other opportunities were not available.

The first conclusion usually has been that these "surplus" farm people must be taken care of "somewhere else." [2] Although some of the committees are finding undeveloped areas that might be used for farming, these are greatly outnumbered by the areas now in farms recommended by land use committees for retirement from commercial farming. Adequate opportunities in industry for large numbers of farm people do not now exist. At present there is no utopian somewhere else for all the surplus farm people to go to.

Areas now in farms but classed as unsuited for commercial farming present a special problem when the lack of opportunities elsewhere is considered. Getting people out of such areas is a poor solution for the problem if the people find themselves no better off, or perhaps even worse off, in the new location.

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[2] JOHNSTONE, PAUL H. SOMEWHERE ELSE. U. S. Bur. Agr. Econ., Land Policy Rev. 2 (6): 1-9, 1939.

The fact is, of course, that a large proportion of the surplus farm people will have to remain where they are, at least for the present. In view of this prospect, it is clear that unless constructive employment is found in activities other than commercial crop production, continued heavy outlays for relief will be necessary in many rural areas. This situation calls for a fresh look at possibilities for constructive local employment in other lines. It seems also to call for consideration of a more adequate program for maintaining our agricultural resources, through conservation linked up closely with the employment needs of local people; there is need for perhaps 750,000 men in conservation.[3] It calls, too, for thinking in terms of an agriculture that consists of more than commercial farming. This might be a combination of commercial farming with live-at-home farming and part-time farming. It would include a long-time program of adjustment for families in submarginal areas. For example, special educational programs for those areas might aim to equip the young people for vocations other than agricultural production. These vocations might include agricultural services such as catering to the recreation trade, conservation, and rural industries of various types, as well as preparation for city jobs. The final retirement of submarginal land from farming would be postponed until the young folks had found opportunities in other fields and the old folks were done with the land. In the meantime, rehabilitation of natural resources and of the people might reduce the need for the people to move elsewhere.

Such a program might be supplemented in considerable degree with rural industries. There are also substantial but undetermined possibilities in utilizing a vast acreage of land now largely idle which might substantially help support unemployed and underemployed farm people in ways that would not add to the problem of surpluses. Much of this land not generally suited for farming is suited for other uses, notably timber growing, recreation, wildlife production, watershed protection, and in some cases stock grazing. Land of this character makes up more than 75 percent of the area of about 500 counties. It embraces 50 to 75 percent of the land in some 700 other counties, and 25 to 50 percent of another 700. This land does not include desert and semidesert areas, but rather the unimproved lands that are of real potential value for forestry or other agricultural uses. Many of these 1,900 counties (there are roughly 3,000 counties in the 48 States) are among those where the surplus of farmers is greatest. Altogether they include two-thirds of all farms in the United States. Whether this unimproved land is in farms or outside of them, it usually has had little or no real management or care.

Planning for Idle People and Idle Lands

The problem of unemployed and underemployed farm people seems linked up in many cases with these idle and partly idle lands. The problem also concerns the farmers outside the idle-land counties, because the high cost of relief for these needy people adds to the tax burden. What are the possibilities of rehabilitating the land and the people together in counties having a surplus of people and a large

[3] GOODRICH, CARTER; ALLIN, BUSHROD W.; THORNTHWAITE, C. WARREN; and others. MIGRATION AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY. 763 pp., illus. Philadelphia and London. 1936. See p. 409.

acreage of idle land? There are many areas, for example, where people are poorly housed and buildings are in need of repair when nearby forest lands might be producing timber to meet their requirements as well as providing additional cash income. Similar forest lands in Europe support families at the rate of one worker for approximately 100 acres. There, in many instances, forest work is combined with part-time farming.[4] In the United States the surface has scarcely been scratched in managing this kind of land to support a better rural life.

The land use committee in Parke County, Ind., decided that 75,000 acres of "woods pasture" in the county is neither good woods nor good pasture and that it is not contributing as it should because of the way it is used. The committee decided that one of its jobs is to develop a program of better use for this land.

The committees in Belknap and Coos Counties in New Hampshire have decided that a way to make unimproved lands in farms contribute more is to have a joint pasture- and woodland-improvement project. The program has already spread to several other counties. It involves making a definite decision as to what part of the unimproved land is to be developed as improved pasture and what part as forest. Then it involves managing each tract for the use to which it is best suited.

Other problems involved in bringing unimproved lands under constructive development and use are those of commercially owned forest land and of large acreages of abandoned cut-over lands that are tax-delinquent.

The problem of surpluses, of course, is encountered in all plans for putting land to work. While long-time planning must be guided primarily by potential demand rather than by current effective demand, any increase in current production needs to be accompanied by an increase in effective demand. The new production naturally should be directed toward things for which a potential demand exists. Consistent effort is necessary to keep these considerations in view in formulating basic plans. The essential fact in connection with the development of programs to use idle land in rural areas is that in large part they are best adapted to producing things of which many people do not have enough. Much of this potential demand exists in the same locality with the idle land. Housing, fuel, outdoor recreation, and wildlife are some of the needs that might be filled better through a program of wise land use. In many areas public action of various kinds, especially a rural works program, doubtless would be required in reclaiming this land.

Institutional Adjustments

In addition to measures directly concerned with the physical use of land, land use planning committees will continue and probably increase their interest in institutional adjustments. One of the major fields of interest may be modifying or broadening rural educational systems to aid stranded farm youth in preparing for vocations other than agricultural production. More equitable assessment of farm property and debt adjustments doubtless will be primary fields of

[4] SPARHAWK, W. N. FOREST EMPLOYMENT IN GERMANY. U. S. Dept. Agr. Cir. 471, 52 pp. 1938.

interest. Other fields are those of recreational and social facilities and activities, rural electrification, tax delinquency, marketing problems, cooperative enterprises, changes in the type of farming, road programs, and the powers, functions, and organization of local government.

In the field of land tenure, committees will probably continue to find some of the greatest opportunities for constructive work. They will be concerned with the fact that for farmers the real basis of both security and liberty is stable tenure of land. They will deal with absentee versus local farm ownership of land and with improving the relations between landlord and tenant in the interests of both. Reducing the size of large holdings, if done with just concern for all interests, might at times be deemed necessary to make conditions better for farmers as a whole. On the other hand, in cases where large operations have marked advantages in efficiency, cooperative methods might be preferred by farm people.

Any agricultural adjustments required by war conditions in the rest of the world and in the interest of national defense will, of course, have the close attention of planning committees.

These are only a few of the problems with which planning committees will continue to concern themselves. Great diversity of action that can help improve the condition of agriculture and of farm people has already been indicated in the results obtained in the planning process.

Private Action as Well as Public

In looking ahead, one of the most fascinating things to consider is how the adjustments agreed upon in land use planning will be achieved. Of particular interest is the probable division of the work between private and public agencies. Private action already resulting from cooperative planning indicates some of the possibilities.

As planning work goes on and more committees agree upon goals and objectives, the question "Now what do we do?" seems bound to lead farmers, technicians, and administrators to thinking more and more of how the goals may be achieved by private as well as by Government action. Gradually this practical approach to problems may broaden the field of private action. In this way, cooperative planning may possibly make its greatest contribution by helping people to help themselves through private action rather than in the original purpose of coordinating and unifying the programs of Government agencies.

The achievement of many goals and objectives, of course, requires combined private and public action. Yet the possibilities of private action alone in dealing with diverse problems present a major challenge to planning committees. Perhaps ways will be found for private agencies to handle problems that are now looked upon as requiring Government action, and which people dread because of the public cost. Predictions are hazardous, and we should not become overconfident of what might be accomplished to achieve needed adjustments without governmental aid. The land use planning process will not be complete, however, unless it involves a consideration of the possibilities of action by farmers among themselves and in coopera-

tion with other private groups to deal even with such difficult problems as agricultural surpluses, production control, submarginal croplands, reemployment of farmers displaced by technology, and the creation of opportunities for farm youth. At the very least, cooperative planning holds the major hope of developing measures of private-public cooperation that will keep the public cost within reasonable bounds and aid in balancing both public and private budgets.

NEW MEANS TO OLD ENDS

All these details of planning for agriculture and of translating plans into action are aimed at a single result—a better life, including security, through the development of a better agriculture and a better adjustment of the institutions that affect agriculture. The details of agricultural planning are like the parts of an automobile. The operation of an automobile looks simple and unified. But much painstaking work of design, construction, and maintenance goes into making it possible. Its production requires the cooperative work of many people. Without this painstaking cooperative work we would still be riding behind horses.

A good life likewise seems a simple and unified thing to those who have it. But if people are to have a good life and security, in the modern world, much painstaking cooperative work is needed. People who believe in democracy desire to do this cooperative work voluntarily, without regimentation. For them a good life has to include liberty as well as security. Voluntary cooperation in planning is a way to avoid regimented action planned by a dictator.

The desire for a good life is not new. The difference is that today it must be sought in new ways. That is what agricultural planning, through the cooperative efforts of farmers, technicians, and administrators working together in the agricultural counties, seeks to accomplish.