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## FOOD RESEARCH INSTITUTE STUDIES

Volume XVI

1977-78

*No. 1*The Population Problem and the Development Solution  
by Pan A. Yotopoulos

Chapter I. Introduction .....	1
Chapter II. The Demographic Transition: Which Economic and Demographic Variables Interact? .....	8
Chapter III. The Conceptual Framework: Economic and Other Determinants of Population Growth .....	23
Chapter IV. The Conceptual Framework Continued: Development Consequences of Population Growth .....	45
Chapter V. Agriculture-Specific Aspects of Economic- Demographic Interactions .....	56
Chapter VI. Population Growth and Agricultural Employment .....	70
Chapter VII. Agricultural Constraints on Population Growth .....	95
Chapter VIII. Conclusions .....	118
Citations .....	120

*No. 2*

Interrelationships Among Nutrition, Health, Population and Development .....	Bruce F. Johnston and Reynaldo Martorell	1
Development, Poverty, and Basic Human Needs: Some Issues .....	T. N. Srinivasan	11
Research Directions in Income Distribution, Nutrition, and the Economics of Food .....	Lance Taylor	29
The Interaction of Nutrition, Infection, and Mortality During Recent Food Crises in Bangladesh .....	A.K.M. Alauddin Chowdhury and Lincoln C. Chen,	47
Socioeconomic Development and Fertility Change in Rural Africa .....	James E. Kocher	63
Nutrition and Population in Health Sector Planning .....	Carl E. Taylor	77
Integration of Health, Nutrition, and Family Planning: The Companiganj Project in Bangladesh .....	Colin McCord	91

*No. 3*

Organization, Scale, and Performance of the Grain Trade .....	Richard E. Caves	107
Implications of Private Storage of Grains for Buffer Stock Schemes to Stabilize Prices .....	Anne E. Peck	125
Turnips, the Seventh Day Adventist Principle, and Management Bias .....	William O. Jones	141
Economies of Scale, Income Distribution, and Small-Enterprise Promotion in Ghana's Timber Industry .....	John M. Page, Jr.	159
The Prospects for Asian Rice Production .....	Robert W. Herdt, Amanda Te, and Randolph Barker	183
Estimation of Hedging and Speculative Positions in Futures Markets: An Alternative Approach .....	David J.S. Rutledge	205
E. Louise Peffer: In Memoriam .....		213

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AGRICULTURAL CHANGE IN TROPICAL AFRICA

Kenneth R.M. Anthony, Bruce F. Johnston,  
William O. Jones, and Victor C. Uchendu

In this book, two economists, an anthropologist, and an agronomist examine African small-holder farming to determine how agricultural productivity might be increased. The authors, all of whom have had long experience in tropical Africa, consider the place of agriculture in the national economy, the historical background of current problems, and the nature of cultural change. The monograph is based on seven field studies carried out in five African countries in addition to the general literature on economic, technical, and social change in sub-Saharan Africa.

The discussion focuses on the role of the market, the varieties of African responses to changes in the economic order, and the quality of agricultural research in Africa and of the communications between research stations and farmers. A principal factor that inhibits productivity on small farms is found to be ignorance of the nature of existing farm systems on the part of government policy makers. This has resulted in lack of simple yield-increasing innovations, insufficient expenditure on agricultural research, government interference in product and input markets, and inadequate national capacity for produce marketing and spatial arbitrage.

The book will be of great value to agricultural and development economists and to those with a special interest in tropical Africa.

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