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This study may provide some clues to the problem of economies of size in agriculture.

Mr. Atherton has given the historian, economist, and general reader a brilliant, yet scholarly, account of one aspect of the western cattle industry which has been neglected. His book will be of basic importance for years to come.

Wayne D. Rasmussen

A Study of Managerial Processes of Midwestern Farmers

Edited by Glenn L. Johnson, Albert N. Halter, Harald R. Jensen, and D. Woods Thomas. Iowa State University Press. 221 pages. 1961. \$4.95.

MUCH OF THE VALUE of teaching and research done by agricultural economists, particularly production economists, is in its ultimate application by farm managers to real decision problems. This being the case, it is surprising, at least at first glance, that so little has been done to explore and document the managerial processes of farm managers.

Most research on the managerial process has been almost exclusively conceptual or exclusively empirical; seldom have the two phases of investigation been integrated. But this book reports a study that is both conceptual and empirical. It contains a wealth of information of both types and it provides a test situation for numerous hypotheses about the managerial process. It is largely a report of specific research undertakings; it is not, nor can it be expected to be, a definitive treatment of the managerial process of farmers.

Probably because the book has several authors and, in large part, is a research report or a series of such reports, it lacks continuity and ease of transition from one topic to another. Chapter topics include an introduction, sources of information used by farmers, knowledge situations, analytical processes in farm management, formulation of expectations, decision making, and utility of gains and losses. In addition, there are four final chapters by Glenn Johnson, three of which are largely conceptual; the fourth sums up major findings of the study.

A significant addition is an appendix containing a questionnaire used in interviewing more than a thousand Midwest farmers, and instructions to enumerators. The appendix helps the reader to

evaluate the study results in view of the specific questions asked.

Much of the book follows the outline of earlier writings by the senior author and Cecil B. Haver on the same subject. These earlier writings were largely conceptual—this empirical study of Midwestern farmers undertakes to verify, to strengthen, or to refute this conceptual framework.

Although the book contains elements of conceptualization, hypothesizing, and empirical testing, these are not always well integrated. Chapter 10, for example, suffers from this lack. The conceptual nomenclature of resource fixity in this chapter appears to overwhelm the limited empirical results relevant to this subject obtained in the study. This is not to be critical of the quality of either, per se, but only to question the relative space devoted to each. Again, this disparity between rationalism and empiricism probably has its origin in the specific research conducted and available for reporting, rather than in the philosophical research position of the author.

Individual readers will find some chapters more or less useful, depending on their interest in such topics as communications, formulation of expectations, the measurement of utility functions, insurance, and so on. As one reads through the book it becomes increasingly obvious why this important subject matter area had not previously been more completely researched. Problems of measurement, comparability, consistency, and so on are all exemplified by research reported in the several chapters of this volume.

Its greatest usefulness will be to provide a reference for much needed spadework research on this topic. In addition to supplying answers to some specific questions—34 results and conclusions about the managerial process are listed—the work provides much information of value in suggesting and guiding additional and more detailed research efforts on well delineated subtopics.

Anyone wanting to explore the managerial processes of farmers would be well advised to devote the time necessary to reading sections of this book relevant to his interests. The time and effort spent by the authors in preparation of the volume resulted in furthering our knowledge of the subject covered. But anyone who lacks a genuine interest in the subject will find the book not easy to read.

W. B. Sundquist