



AgEcon SEARCH
RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURAL & APPLIED ECONOMICS

The World's Largest Open Access Agricultural & Applied Economics Digital Library

This document is discoverable and free to researchers across the globe due to the work of AgEcon Search.

Help ensure our sustainability.

Give to AgEcon Search

AgEcon Search
<http://ageconsearch.umn.edu>
aesearch@umn.edu

*Papers downloaded from **AgEcon Search** may be used for non-commercial purposes and personal study only. No other use, including posting to another Internet site, is permitted without permission from the copyright owner (not AgEcon Search), or as allowed under the provisions of Fair Use, U.S. Copyright Act, Title 17 U.S.C.*

Economics with Applications to Agriculture. By EDWIN F. DUMMEIER, RICHARD B. HEFLEBOWER, and THEODORE NORMAN. McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York. 718 pages. 1950.

TEXTBOOKS GROW. At least some of the better ones have, as illustrated by the fact that Alfred Marshall's famous *Principles of Economics*, first published in 1890, reached into an eighth edition in 1920.

In the current case we are concerned with the new third edition of *Economics with Applications to Agriculture*, a book first published over the names of Edwin F. Dummeier and Richard B. Heflebower in 1934, followed by a second edition in 1940. But neither the simple fact that this is now in its third edition nor the correlative fact that it is currently used as a text in some 44 colleges and universities hardly answers the question as to why it should be accorded a review in *Agricultural Economics Research*.

The fact is that this text when first published in 1934 was in several ways an interesting experiment. Not only did the authors endeavor to include within one cover an introductory course to economic principles but they more specifically tried to include also an examination of the way in which these principles might be applied or used in the agricultural field.

There is a most interesting thesis which one could develop, running to the general effect that a handful of statisticians, a few agricultural economists, and a few general economists, especially Keynes, have gone far toward bringing about a revolution in both economic theory and its application to current problems within the United States over the last 25 years or so. This thesis would rest not so much upon various theories which have been advanced but rather upon the concern of the statisticians, the agricultural economists, and equally Keynes, with the interweaving of economics and the problems of real life, with the endeavor not only to measure what was happening but also to relate the various facts to each other and fit them into some meaningful and useful framework.

It is fair to say, I think, that at the time the first edition of this book appeared in 1934 most textbook writers were not concerned with agricultural programs and farm relief. Nor did Dummeier and Heflebower necessarily endorse the programs going forward in the agricultural field; they did seem to feel that their students should not only know economic principles but should also know something about agriculture, the problems with which it was faced, and the agencies and influences at work in the field.

The fact that the book has found sufficient acceptance to warrant a third edition indicates that there was quite a bit to be said for their idea. The experiment worked.

As originally written, the book was evidently designed chiefly for students in Colleges of Agriculture who were not taking a general course in economics before studying agricultural economics. The second edition does not seem to have introduced much of a change. But in the third edition it appears that Norman and Heflebower have endeavored to do two things; (1) To strengthen their theoretical exposition, working toward a clearer and better integrated statement, and (2) to introduce more of the aggregative analyses, starting with an introduction to the national income approach in the first chapter.

Some of the shifts in emphasis are perhaps reflected in the index. For example, the references to Alfred Marshall drop from 8 in the first edition to 4 in the third, but the Marshall Plan shows up 6 times; references to Keynes increase from 4 to 7. As for the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, the number increases from 3 to 17. But these counts are incidental. The interesting thing about the index is that there are 150 or more references to the ideas, legislative acts, organizations, and individual names, which specifically belong in the agricultural economics field.

O. V. Wells