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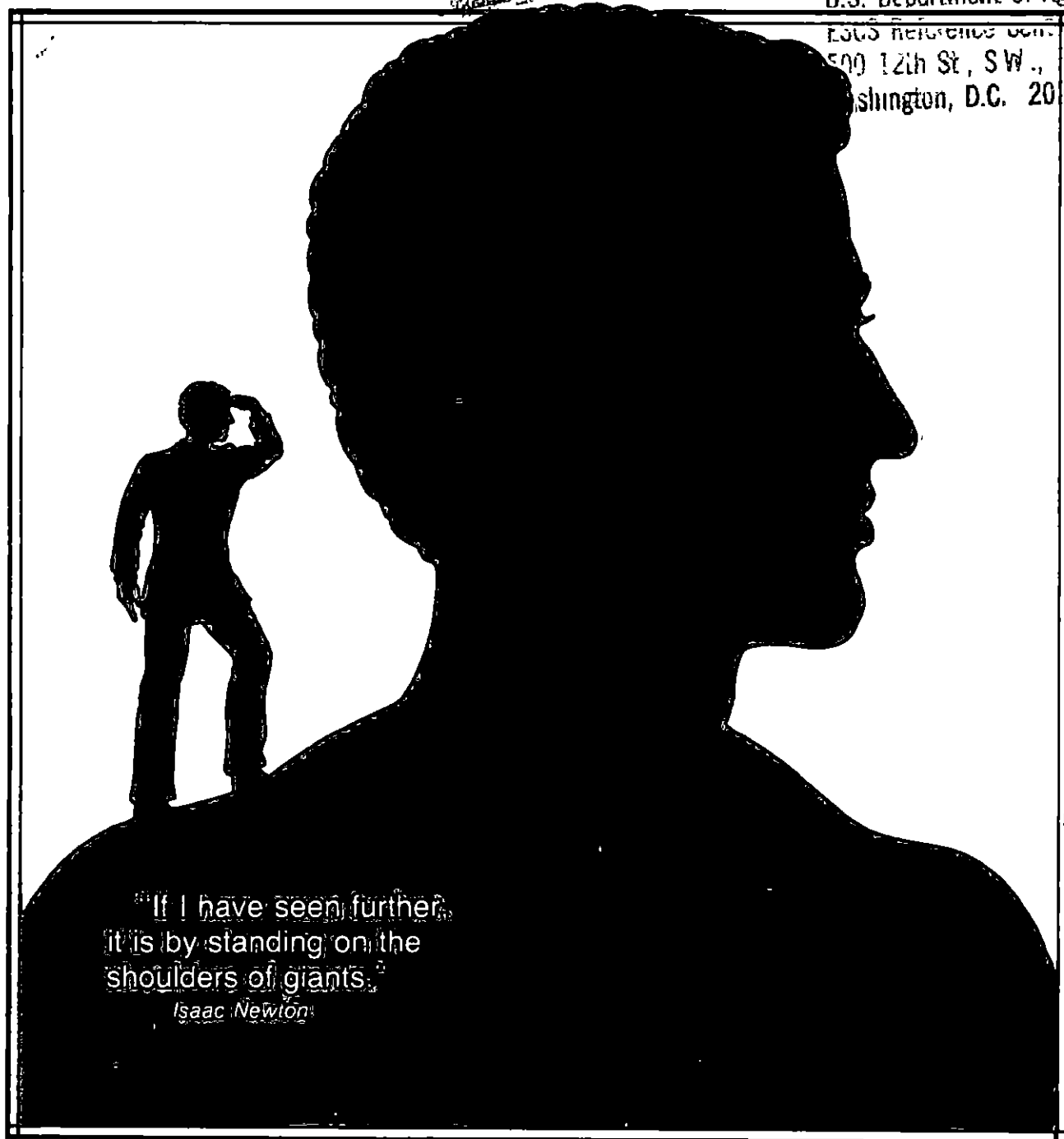
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"If I have seen further,  
it is by standing on the  
shoulders of giants."

*Isaac Newton*

# AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS RESEARCH

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# IN THIS ISSUE

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"If I have seen further," said Isaac Newton in a letter to Robert Hooke, "it is by standing on the shoulders of giants." This graphic aphorism summarizes a popular view of the process by which knowledge accumulates.

The aphorism has a long and interesting history. Its historian, Robert K. Merton, has traced through the centuries references to dwarfs and pygmies standing, sitting, or otherwise perched on the shoulders of giants. He identifies its origin with a remark in the early 12th century by Bernard of Chartres. Many of Merton's historical references imply that the aphorism has long been a part of folklore. In these days of increased sensitivity to civil rights issues, the aphorism may be awkward. Nonetheless, we can say—in the spirit of its use over the centuries—that each author in this issue sees a little farther by standing on someone's shoulders.

In the first article, Bessler and Schrader apply a concept known as

Granger Causality to the problem of providing a causal explanation of the price of turkeys in terms of the prices of various turkey parts. C. W. J. Granger, who cites in his footnotes the names of people on whose shoulders he stood, has observed that for economic systems the direction of causality is highly debatable. Using Granger's technique for examining causality in economic systems, Bessler and Schrader perceive that prices of turkey breasts are causally related to prices of whole birds which, in turn, appear causally related to tail and wing prices.

The rural segment of the U.S. population has been increased in recent years by urban-to-rural migration. This demographic change has raised a number of research questions about the social and economic characteristics of migrants and nonmigrants as well as commuters and noncommuters. Bowles and Beale, by standing on the shoulders of statisticians at the U.S. Bureau of the Census who have pro-

vided a new data source, discern important attributes of migrants and commuters. They note, for example, the likelihood that urban-to-rural migrants will commute from their new rural residences to urban work places.

Giants of the past have provided present-day agricultural economists with valuable research tools. In the third article, Williams combines two of these tools—the concept of a tradeoff curve and the computational procedure called linear programming—to visualize economic development planning in a rural-oriented, multicounty region. Williams sees a conflict between the interests of management and the interests of labor in a developing region. A region can grow efficiently toward the goals of either group or toward compromise. Resolutions of such conflicts have implications for a region's future economic and social environment.

CLARK EDWARDS

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