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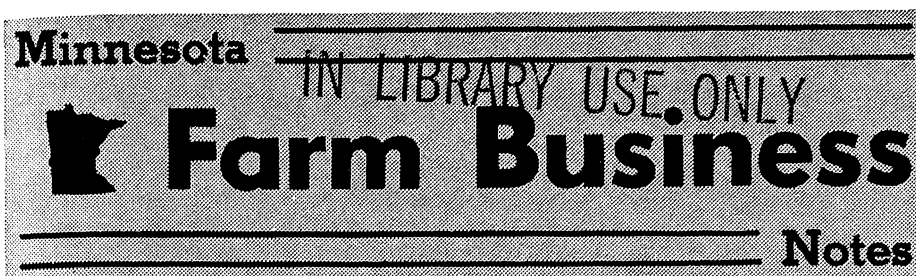
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## Alternatives for Minnesota County Government

Robert I. Wessel

Persons concerned with the organization of Minnesota county government are looking for alternatives to alleviate some problems existing in its operation and finances. This article describes some organizational variations that exist in county government in Minnesota, the Upper Midwest, and throughout the United States.

## Minnesota Lamb Consumption Patterns

D. C. Dahl, C. E. Gates, and W. J. Aunan

Despite concerted promotional efforts by lamb producers and the meat industry, per capita lamb and mutton consumption in the United States decreased from 4.8 pounds in 1947-49 to 4.5 pounds in 1964. This decline was contrary to a 16-percent increase in per capita red meat consumption during the same period.

Previous studies suggest that these relative and absolute declines resulted from a low consumer preference for lamb. In addition, it has been asserted that lamb was not sufficiently "available" to consumers at retail outlets.

To learn more about consumer preference for lamb in Minnesota and its availability at retail, the Departments of Animal Husbandry and Agricultural Economics surveyed persons attending the Minnesota State Fair in 1963. Nearly 4,300 persons filled out usable questionnaires.

By answering one set of questions, respondents classified themselves "demographically" by age level, sex, marital status, residence, education, and family income level. They also answered six questions concerning lamb consumption and purchasing practices.

Because of the survey method used, those responding could not be expected to constitute a representative sample of all Minnesota consumers. The respondents were older, consisted of proportionately more females and married people, were more highly educated, and had higher family incomes than did Minnesotans generally. However, residence of respondents by city size was approximately the same as 1960 Minnesota residency proportions.

These consumers were asked: (1) if they had ever tasted eight different lamb cuts, (2) how they ranked three

of these relative to comparable cuts of beef and pork, (3) whether seven of the eight cuts were available where they purchased their meat, (4) what type of meat market they used most often, (5) how frequently they purchased lamb, and (6) why lamb was not purchased more often.

### LAMB CUTS TASTED AND RANKINGS

Nearly 60 percent of the respondents had tasted leg of lamb and over 50 percent claimed they had tasted shoulder chops. The least tasted of all lamb cuts was lamburger; less than 14 percent indicated that they had eaten it (see table 1).

Of all persons responding, over one-fourth indicated that they preferred (ranked in first place) the taste of lamb chops to pork chops or beef steak. About one-fifth of the group said they preferred the taste of lamb roasts to pork or beef roasts. But only slightly more than 1 in 10 preferred chopped lamb meat to sausage or hamburger.

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Table 1. Lamb cuts tasted and taste rankings

Lamb cuts	Ever tasted	Lamb preferred over beef and pork*
	percent	
Chops:		27.2
Shoulder .....	50.8	
Loin .....	39.8	
Rib .....	28.9	
Roasts:		20.2
Leg .....	59.6	
Loin .....	21.1	
Shoulder .....	26.1	
Other:		11.3
Burgers .....	13.7	
Stew .....	37.0	

\* The comparable cuts identified on the questionnaire were pork chops and beef steak, pork and beef roasts, and sausage and hamburgers.

### MINNESOTA

Several Minnesota counties altered the general organization of government because of: (1) absolute necessity, (2) a desire to limit costs, or (3) interest in using modern mechanization and procedures.

Some Minnesota counties eliminated the county superintendent of schools when rural school districts were consolidated to 12 or less. Instead, these counties employ a district school superintendent or a county superintendent from an adjoining county.

All but 14 Minnesota counties consolidated the administration of relief on the county level. The remaining 14 use villages, towns, and cities as agents caring for relief while the counties administer the Federal-State-County welfare programs.

A major change that occurred in Minnesota was the elimination of county poor farms. Other methods are now used to provide for indigents.

Some counties incorporated microfilm recording and data processing systems to provide faster and better service.

One innovation being tried in Minnesota is the intergovernmental use of law enforcement personnel. In this instance the county sheriff provides a deputy who is responsible for peace officer work in the village making the agreement. This system provides villages in the county with a local officer and central administration.

Red Lake County used the Pennington County judge of probate for an extended time in 1964 after the former judge died and a replacement was not available. Red Lake County also reduced office forces to the statutory minimum in order to control costs. This reduction resulted in most elective offi-

(Continued on page 2)

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**County Government . . .**

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cers serving without help except for additional assistance during peak-load periods.

**UPPER MIDWEST**

Counties in Upper Midwestern states are attempting many administrative changes—either because they can no longer support the existing system or because they want more economical methods of operation.

The North Dakota constitution requires that counties under 15,000 population combine the county judge and the clerk of court. In counties under 6,000 population the register of deeds office must be consolidated with the two offices already combined. North Dakota statutes also permit counties to adopt optional forms such as the county manager system but no county has tried these forms.

More drastic changes in county government are occurring in South Dakota. One county is totally consolidated with a contiguous county; three others discontinued their administrations and now rely upon an adjoining county to provide necessary administrative machinery. These three counties have only a board of road commissioners to determine road policy. All else is cared for by the adjoining county.

Michigan, under a different form of county government, allows some consolidation of county offices. The Michigan county clerk, an office in some ways similar to the county auditor in Minnesota, serves as county clerk of court. In 17 counties the clerk also functions as the register of deeds.

Some Michigan counties employ administrators who serve as the executive officers of the counties. Michigan counties also have a separate road commission. This system leaves the county board of supervisors responsible for other county questions.

Some Iowa counties jointly employ county superintendents of schools. One seven-county area sponsors an educational television program. Other counties cooperate in the employment of special personnel. Two Iowa counties cooperatively provide an education program for retarded children.

A recently enacted statute permits Iowa counties to combine up to five elective and appointive offices. These offices include the auditor, treasurer, assessor, clerk of court, and recorder. However, no Iowa county has consolidated these offices under the permissive statutes.

**OTHER VARIATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES**

Counties in various parts of the United States are trying some of the following innovations:

Petroleum County, Montana, has a county manager. Several Virginia counties have managers or some other form of strong appointive executive.

Fairfax County, Virginia, removed the sheriff from law enforcement and made him an officer of the court. Law enforcement in rural unincorporated areas is provided by a county career police force. The county police chief is responsible to the county executive.

Some New York counties and Milwaukee County, Wisconsin, elect executives. This system is similar to a mayor-council system. Under it the county council establishes policy for the executive to administer. Such a system focuses responsibility on one central figure rather than diffusing it throughout the typically large county boards.

In parts of New England, where counties were not significant units of local government, the states completely abolished them. Parts of northern Maine are no longer served by any form of local government. Instead, the state provides local services. Connecticut totally abolished counties; former county services are now provided by state agencies.

**ALTERNATIVES IN URBAN COUNTIES**

Some experimentation has been made with county government administration and its relationship to urban communities. Los Angeles County, California, provides common municipal services for some incorporated places on a contract basis. Dade County, Florida; Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana; and Davidson County, Tennessee, partially combined

their organizations with city governments.

Some counties and cities combined to form a single unit of government. San Francisco, California, and Denver, Colorado, are examples of city-county consolidation. (The placing of the St. Paul mayor on the Ramsey County board of commissioners provides some evidence of merging units of government in the Minnesota metropolitan area.)

Wayne County, Michigan, cooperates with four surrounding counties in areas of mutual concern such as roads, water, sewage, waste disposal, and recreation. Intercounty committees cooperatively plan projects of common interest.

The examples pointed out indicate that a wide range of alternatives exists and that many are being successfully tried. Examples extend from minor changes in the number of personnel employed, through intercounty cooperation in the use of specialized personnel, to the complete consolidation of counties. And, various chief executive approaches are in use in some county systems.

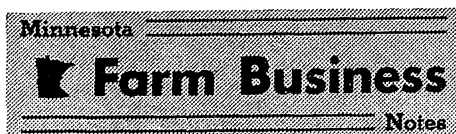
Metropolitan counties are trying different forms of intercounty cooperation and county-city consolidation. So experience is available to provide guidance to state and county officials concerned with the need for a changing local governmental system.

**SIGNIFICANCE**

What are the advantages and disadvantages of the alternatives? What form should county government take? No clear-cut answers exist. Governmental organization depends upon many factors. Obviously, institutions that have successfully operated for a long time and continue to operate without any major problems should not be changed merely for the sake of change.

Minnesota county governments have instituted some changes within statutory limits; additional changes without statutory revision are possible. The five-county cooperation around Detroit, Michigan, is an example of what could be done in some areas in Minnesota. No doubt, possible variations will not be desirable for all situations.

Perhaps a permissive statute is needed in Minnesota that would allow counties to modify their organizations to fit their conditions. Then local governments could adopt practices from the already tried examples or they could innovate with new practices when the need arises.



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## Lamb Consumption . . .

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Taste experiences and rankings were also tested for significance in terms of demographic characteristics.

A definite relationship existed between age and: (1) number of lamb cuts tasted and (2) how lamb taste ranked with beef or pork. The older the respondents the greater was the number of lamb cuts they had tasted. The older age groups also had a greater preference for lamb than did the younger set. For example, of those people over age 65, 58 percent preferred lamb chops to pork chops or beef steak.

Classified by sex, proportionately more males than females tasted the several lamb cuts listed. But the females declared a stronger preference for lamb than did male respondents. A similar relationship held for married and single respondents. Married people exhibited more lamb taste experiences; single people claimed greater preference for it than did married respondents.

Proportionately more people in higher education categories tasted the lamb cuts listed than did those with lesser levels of education. Contrary to this relationship, a greater proportion of persons with lower levels of educational attainment declared a preference for lamb than did those in the higher education categories.

This type of taste and taste ranking relationship was also true for people of low and high incomes. Although people with low incomes had tasted fewer lamb cuts than had those with high incomes, they claimed a greater preference for lamb than did high income groups.

There was no clear relationship between taste experience and ranking and residence by city size. Nor was there a relationship by place of meat purchase. Obviously, people who had tasted lamb and who preferred it also purchased it more frequently.

## LAMB CUT AVAILABILITY

Over 40 percent of the respondents felt that seven of the eight lamb cuts listed were "always" available where they purchased meat. Only 9 percent said that lamb was "never" available to them (see table 2). The "most available" lamb cuts were loin chops, shoulder chops, and leg of lamb. The "least available" was chopped lamb.

A greater proportion of the older people surveyed indicated that lamb cuts were "always" available than did those in younger age categories. Of course, the older respondents had tasted

more cuts and indicated a higher preference for lamb as well.

Relationships between lamb cut availability and the respondent's sex or marital status were not clear. Nevertheless, greater proportions of the lowest income and education groups (where preference was high) said that lamb was available than did respondents in high income and education categories.

An important difference in availability was noted for people living in towns less than 10,000 in size. For example, one-fourth of the people living in towns of less than 2,500 population claimed that lamb was "never" available to them.

People who had tasted lamb and preferred it to pork or beef also claimed it was more available to them. More people who purchased their meat in butcher service stores found lamb available than did those trading in self-service markets.

## REASONS FOR NONPURCHASE

For all respondents, the most important reason why lamb was not purchased more often was because they "never thought of it." Other important reasons were that they "objected to its taste" or felt that it was "too high in price relative to other meats" (table 3).

The importance of these reasons differed when respondents were classified by age, sex, marital status, education, residence, and income. Older people didn't buy more lamb because it was either too high priced or not available to them. People under age 40 claimed they never thought of it.

Respondents with lower levels of education failed to buy lamb more often because they objected to its taste or felt it was not available to them. On the other hand, those with higher education listed the high price of lamb as the greatest deterrent to more frequent lamb purchases.

People living in small towns listed the unavailability of lamb as the prime reason for nonpurchase. People from large cities said they never thought of it.

Respondents who had tasted the various lamb cuts didn't buy lamb more frequently because it was too high in price or because they wanted variety in their diet. People preferring lamb cuts to comparable cuts of beef or pork listed unavailability as the most important reason for not buying lamb more often.

Respondents who ranked lamb availability quite high, on the other hand, didn't purchase lamb more frequently because they needed variety in their

Table 2. Lamb cut availability

Lamb cuts	Availability			
	Always	Some-times	Never	Don't know
	percent.....			
Leg of lamb .....	43.7	40.1	5.7	10.4
Shoulder roasts .....	38.5	37.9	7.8	15.9
Shoulder chops .....	43.7	34.8	6.9	14.6
Loin chops .....	48.7	32.7	5.9	12.7
Rib chops .....	41.9	31.9	8.3	18.0
Chopped lamb .....	24.4	27.7	18.8	29.2
Stew meat .....	37.8	32.0	9.9	20.4
All cuts .....	40.2	34.2	8.8	16.9

Table 3. Why lamb was not purchased more often

Reasons	Percent of all responses*
Never thought of it .....	24.4
Objected to its taste .....	23.3
Too high in price relative to other meats .....	19.3
Usually not available .....	14.2
Need variety in diet .....	13.9
Can't be prepared easily .....	2.5
Usually ate at restaurant .....	2.4

\* Multiple answers were given by most respondents. The percent is of all answers.

diet, usually bought in restaurants, or couldn't prepare lamb easily.

## CONCLUSIONS

The foregoing findings suggest that additional or newly directed effort is needed by the lamb industry to acquaint the consumer with lamb and to promote lamb as a meat alternative on a continuing basis.

Promotion campaigns may be made more effective by introducing lamb to those who object to its taste or have never tasted it. In-store taste programs could be used to attract potential customers. However, largescale promotions should be geared with ample supplies so that those who seldom think of lamb can buy it from a wide selection of cuts.

Apparently, the urban community does not have a major problem in lamb availability. But distribution of lamb to people in smaller towns should be encouraged if more lamb is to be sold.

Lower lamb prices, due to lower production costs, are not likely unless highly coordinated programs of production and processing make them possible. Shifts in processing units to areas of production, and more emphasis on processing lamb into retail frozen cuts, may help provide higher degrees of production and marketing efficiency. Lamb must be more competitive in price, more broadly available, and be introduced to more consumers if the lamb industry is to share in an expanding red meat market. ■

# the outlook corner

## Minnesota's Population

Anne E. Hammill

Between 1950-60 Minnesota's population increased by 14.5 percent—from just under 3 million persons to just under 3½ million.

Although the overall trend was one of growth, various sections showed declines as well as gains. In northwestern Minnesota, population declined except in Clay, Polk, and Wilkin Counties.

In the southwest, approximately half the counties showed population declines while the remainder increased only slightly.

Population increased in northeastern Minnesota . . . particularly in the easternmost counties. The southeastern portion of the state showed moderate to large population increases with the exception of Fillmore County where it declined.

Population gains in counties were correlated with the size of the major city in each county. Of 17 cities with populations of 10,000 or more, 16 of the 17 counties in which these cities were located showed population increases between 1950-60. Otter Tail County was the exception.

In 1960 approximately 1½ million persons—slightly more than 43 percent of the state's population—were located in the five counties including and surrounding the Twin Cities. Seven percent of the population was located in and around Duluth.

Minnesota's eight economic areas are shown in the map. Population remained almost stable in Areas 1 and 8 between 1950-60; it increased in all other areas except 3 and 5.

Area 3 declined 5 percent and Area 5 declined 3 percent. Both areas are transition zones between the cash crop farming of Area 1 and corn belt agriculture of Area 8. About 43 percent of the populations of Areas 3 and 5 live on farms.

The greatest population increase, 29.9 percent, occurred in Area 4 which includes the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area (TCMA). Hennepin and Ramsey

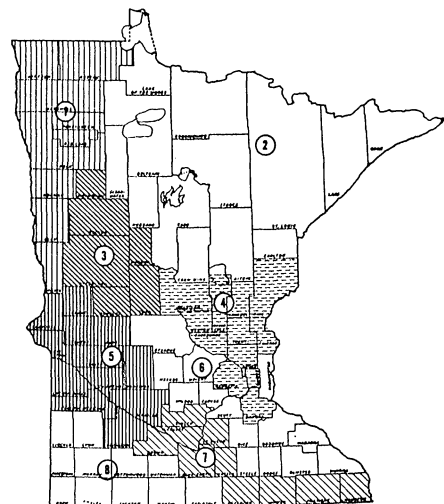
Counties alone accounted for 22.6 percent of the increase (see table).

For Minnesota as a whole and for every area the percentage of population under 21 increased greatly. This trend was particularly pronounced in Area 4. Migration of persons under 21 from outside the area to obtain employment and higher education in the TCMA partially accounted for the greater increase in the under-21 age group.

Changes in the 65 and older age groups reflect in and out migration and death. This age group increased less in Area 4 than in other areas.

Population projections for Minnesota indicate 4.5 to 5 million persons by 1985. Most of this increase will probably center in and around the TCMA which is expected to include 10 counties and up to two-thirds of the state's population.

Populations for areas outside the TCMA will probably show declines.



Minnesota's economic areas

Declines already evident for Areas 3 and 5 will continue; Area 8 probably will lose population as adjustments out of agriculture reach this section.

Population throughout the state is getting younger. The greater relative importance of the under-21 group in Area 4 may be expected to continue as young persons move into the TCMA, marry, and have children.

Population composition by economic areas and for Minnesota, 1950 and 1960

Economic area	Population 1960	Per- cent change from 1950	1960 population distribution by resi- dence as percent of 1960 population			1950 population distribution by age as percent of 1950 population			1960 population distribution by age as percent of 1960 population		
			Urban	Farm	Nonfarm	Under 21	21-65	65+	Under 21	21-65	65+
1	150,222	+0.3	34.7	36.2	29.1	31.4	60.4	8.2	42.5	46.6	10.9
2	440,366	+8.1	52.7	9.9	37.4	27.0	63.6	9.4	41.4	47.5	11.1
3	135,891	-5.0	24.4	43.2	32.4	31.0	60.8	8.2	40.6	46.4	13.0
4	1,553,907	+29.9	89.7	4.2	6.1	24.6	66.8	8.6	40.7	49.8	9.5
5	183,566	-3.1	19.8	42.9	37.3	28.2	62.4	9.4	40.8	46.8	12.4
6	430,622	+16.2	40.8	27.9	31.3	28.6	61.9	9.5	42.9	46.5	10.6
7	274,177	+9.3	43.2	30.5	26.3	27.4	62.8	9.8	41.6	47.3	11.1
8	192,681	+1.2	29.2	40.3	30.5	30.3	60.9	8.8	42.1	46.8	11.1
Minnesota	3,413,864	+14.5	62.2	17.2	20.6	27.1	64.0	8.9	41.4	48.2	10.4

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