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Vol XVII
No. 3

ISSN 0019-5014

JULY-
SEPTEMBER
1962

INDIAN JOURNAL OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS



INDIAN SOCIETY OF
AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS,
BOMBAY

The Agricultural Register (New Series)—Changes in the Economic Pattern, 1957-59, Agricultural Economics Research Institute, University of Oxford, Oxford University Press, London, 1960. Pp. xi + 147. 25s.

The book gives an account of the changes which have occurred in 1957-59 in U.K. Agriculture. This account is supplemented by the reasons why these changes have occurred mainly as estimated by Government Departments and other organizations. It is noted that the net agricultural output as also the net farm income in 1958-59 was below the record in 1957-58 but when adjusted to normal weather conditions, net farm income showed a rising trend. The cost to the Exchequer of support for agriculture showed a decline in 1958-59.

Among the several satisfactory features of the course of production is mentioned the approximate maintenance of the arable acreage with wheat acreage less than in 1956-57; reduction in the supply of milk surplus to liquid requirements, and the decline in the pig-breeding herd from an excessive level, indicating that some of the high cost production was being eliminated.

Features of particular concern to the Government were the increase of feeding stuffs import and the continued expansion of egg production in spite of reductions in price guarantees made in the last few years.

The general policy objectives of the Government remained broadly unchanged in 1958 and 1959. The aim was to foster steady improvement in the competitive position of British Agriculture while maintaining gross output and not increasing the production of eggs, milk and pigs based on imported feeding stuffs in particular. The Government considered that the wider interests of the national economy and of international relations especially with the Commonwealth required that agriculture's dependence on support should be kept as low as possible.

During these years the Government passed two important acts which were intended to put the industry and the economic individual farm business on a sounder basis for the future. The first was the Agriculture Act 1958, mainly to regulate certain aspects of the landowner-tenant relationship, maintain security for the good tenant and at the same time create opportunities for new entries into the industry. Under the Small Farmer Scheme in the Agriculture (Small Farmer) Act 1959, the small farmers, meeting the qualifications prescribed under the Act would have to put forward for the improvement of farm business, plans which would be subject to the approval of the Agricultural Department. They were eligible for two kinds of special grants, namely, farm business grants for carrying out an approved farm business plan and field husbandry grants for land improvements. Under the Small Farmer Supplementary Scheme interim assistance could be given to farmers for whom approved farm business plans were not immediately practicable for certain reasons. It was contended that agriculture was a way of life and the pride in independence which led the small farmer to work all hours and accept a frugal life was something well worth preserving. The Act was expected to enable the small farmers to improve and expand through special assistance.

Three chapters of the book are devoted to the marketing and prices of U.K. Produce—livestock and livestock products, crops and fruits and vegetables. These

contain detailed information on government policy, demand and supply position, prices, action taken by the Government, analysis of the situation by special committees appointed by the Government to study certain problems regarding specific commodities and such other useful information.

The chapter on the Place of Agriculture in the British economy reviews the position of agriculture in relation to the total economy particularly in the light of the data made available in the 1958 Blue Book, the E.E.C. and the O.E.E.C. Statistics. The land prices and rents, distribution of holding, labour employment and earnings, credit situation and various grants and schemes of the Government operating during the years 1958 and 1959 are reviewed in another chapter. The last chapter on 'Inputs' contains information on the consumption and prices of fertilizers, feeding stuffs and machinery.

The publication thus contains valuable information compiled with immense amount of research by the staff. The book should be of value to policy makers and others from our country as also from other countries. The value of the book could be enhanced by proper summing up of each chapter or a summary of the entire book.

D. P. APTE

A New Rural Co-operative System for Comilla Thana: Rural Co-operative Pilot Experiment—First Annual Report, 1961, Henry W. Fairchild and Shamsul Haq, Pakistan Academy for Village Development, Comilla, East Pakistan, July, 1961. Pp. 88. Rs. 2.00.

Experiments in Co-operative Farming—A Study in East India, Agro-Economic Research Centre, Visva-Bharati University, Santiniketan, West Bengal, 1961. Pp. 71. Rs. 2.50.

The first report under review presents useful information on the genesis of the rural co-operative pilot experiment in Comilla Kotwali Thana in East Pakistan, about its objectives, method of organisation and plans and programmes and its results. The report is descriptive and does not contain an analytical study of the activities organised in the Comilla Development Area. Despite this limitation, it provides an insight into the working of the pilot experiment in a very backward area for a period of eighteen months from January 1960 to June 1961 and sets out in bold relief the hurdles to be overcome and focusses attention on the essential requirements of a solution. Behind the experiment lay much patient but hard work by a band of enthusiastic co-operators. It unfolds the story of the pilot experiment covering twenty-five village co-operative groups with a total membership of 1,122 members in Comilla Thana.

The social and economic problems of the region are similar to those of most of East Pakistan. The area typified one in which all the problems associated with the tradition bound feudalistic society and overpopulation existed. Naturally the Pakistan Academy is motivated by a desire to bring about an improvement in the economic and social conditions of the people of the area.