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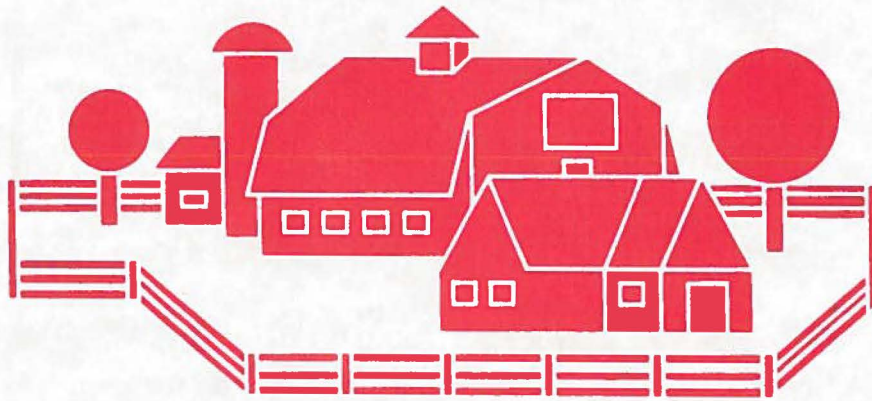
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FARM MANAGEMENT: CHALLENGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR A NEW AGE



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ACCOMPLISHING MORE WITH LESS:
A CHALLENGE FOR FARM MANAGEMENT

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Given the current environment facing American farmers coupled with the limited prospects for State Extension Services across the country for acquiring additional resources, the assigned topic for this presentation portrays a most difficult question which faces Extension Farm Management Workers and their Administrators. However, as difficult as it may be, it is also a very appropriate and timely subject that needs to be discussed and acted upon, not only by ourselves, but by others and especially Extension administrators. In my opinion, the current financial crisis in agriculture has resulted in more focus being placed on Extension farm management programs relative to the total Extension program than has ever existed in my career. With the very likely prospects that the current crisis is going to continue and possibly get worse in the coming year, the focus on Extension farm management may become even stronger. Thus again, the assigned topic of this presentation is not only relevant but also may become the focus of specific administrative actions.

Much has already happened along the line of accomplishing more for a given amount of Extension staff resources in recent months. The Cooperative Extension system can be proud of the response that has been made to assisting farmers during the current financial crisis. Our office pulled together a brief summary of Extension's response in a statement entitled "Cooperative Extension and Agricultural Profitability--Fighting Farm Financial Crisis on the Front Line" which was dated March 1985. We are probably going to have to work hard at preparing similar and more elaborate documentation of Extension's response to the farm financial crisis in the coming months. This would be used particularly to provide justification for continued funding of Extension farm management programs. We had a most unusual experience when Congress added a \$1 million addition for Extension farm financial management programs appropriation at the last minute before it was passed in October 1984. As some of you may be aware, there is some discussion in the budget preparations on the Hill for FY-86 that this funding be continued.

In order to set the stage for a specific discussion of this topic, a number of assumptions and hypotheses about the situation, problems, and prospects facing farmers and Extension Farm Management will be elaborated. Much of this series of points may well be covered in more detail by other speakers during this workshop. However, I believe I should mention them briefly here to help identify the size and complexity of the farm management job which we face. Although the current financial crisis dominates our attention in the short run, the following set of points is meant to apply to the likely situation, expectations, prospects, etc. for the next five years or so down the road.

A. I assume that we will move towards an essentially market oriented U.S. agriculture with minimal government support of prices for major U.S. crops.

Also there may be substantial reduction in the price support mechanisms for other crops such as tobacco, sugar, and peanuts. In addition further declines in dairy price supports seem probable.

B. Crop price levels and the price outlook will be highly dominated by international supply and demand situations and related international factors--primarily the value of the U.S. dollar and efforts of foreign governments which result in restricting U.S. agricultural exports.

C. U.S. farm prices, especially for major crops, are likely to be highly volatile in view of the increasing interrelationship with the various international forces. Most major U.S. and international supply and demand forces seem to be all compounding downward on prices of major U.S. crops at the present time. However, it seems highly unlikely that we will continue to have all of these forces compound in the same downward direction for more than another year or two.

D. The declining demand for livestock products will probably continue for some time to come. Health concerns over the consumption of livestock products are a primary factor, and the impacts of these concerns may become even greater in the coming years.

E. Livestock prices may also suffer in the longer term from lower levels of grain prices and possibly lower forage values. As these lower feed costs become reflected in total variable costs there may be a corresponding increase of livestock output.

F. Vegetable and fruit enterprises in the aggregate seem to have the best long-term prospects. But, even here foreign competition is tremendous for some enterprises; for example, the grape or vineyard enterprise. Also, there may be growing competitiveness between geographic areas in the U.S. for certain vegetable and fruit enterprises. Here again, many parts of the country are moving into the establishment of vineyards--it is surprising how many states are now advertising their wine industry. I have recently heard a Northeastern Farm Management Specialist express interest in fruits and vegetables because of expected adjustments coming to the dairy industry.

G. Much greater emphasis appears to be needed on increasing efficiency, especially in terms of reducing cost per unit produced. This basically refers to all costs independent of pure land charges. How well we are going to be able to compete in international markets will depend on the cost of production per unit (excluding land charges) and our marketing and transportation costs. Much more attention will probably be given to production practices and technologies that help lower cost per unit produced versus much of Extension's previous emphasis on increasing production per se. If U.S. Agriculture does not become more competitive internationally and total U.S. exports continue to grow, we may see substantial amounts of U.S. land go out of crop production.

H. The various factors mentioned above would seem to cause the subject of comparative advantage and questions about what geographic areas (and countries) have increasing or decreasing comparative advantage to receive a growing amount of attention. Helping individual farmers, farm commodity groups, communities, regions, etc. to analyze their comparative advantage, situation, and alternative actions in view of their competitive position would

appear to be a major role of Extension and the land grant system. Again, the marketing costs and marketing systems will play a large part in determining comparative advantage. The Southern Extension Farm Management Committee under the leadership of John Holt, Florida is giving some special attention to the topic of comparative advantage.

A side note on land values and land charges which may be included in our enterprise budgets seems to be in order. At times there seems to be confusion about the economic concept that in the long run the agricultural value of land is directly dependent on the returns that remain after other costs are covered (this includes what farmers are willing to take for family labor). It is recognized that there is often some value attached to land just for the sake of owning land (hobby aspects, land in the family), and that urban uses or potential uses of land greatly complicate the determination of land values. However, the key factor in whether land can be used to effectively produce and compete in the production of a crop, depends basically on the cost of production before any payments are made on the debt or interest that might be associated with the ownership of the land involved. There may be an increased need to help producers understand that land charges have little impact in determining competitive position.

I. The increasing emphasis given to the individual farmer devoting more attention to and becoming more sophisticated in marketing his products in recent years needs to be continued. The pressure to reduce production costs, together with the concept of locking in profits, will become even more important in insuring profitable farm operations. However, managerial attention needs also to be given to strategies for dealing with the possibility of sharply higher prices (or lower prices), especially those stemming from international impacts (i.e. how much calculated risk should a farmer take?) .

J. Risk management concepts and risk management strategies need to be the focus of substantially increased attention. For some time there has been increasing interest and discussion about this topic including a national special project back in the 1970's in which risk management educational materials were prepared. However, it is my feeling that we have not made any great strides yet in helping farmers better understand risk and utilize risk management tools and strategies. There have been some good efforts but it appears we haven't been too successful in incorporating risk and probability aspects into our teaching materials. It is my view that as we prepare and present teaching materials on specific management problems which farmers face--such as major marketing decisions, new farm investments, participation in farm programs, etc. that concepts of risks and probability should be highly integrated with the other relevant subject matter pertinent for each specific decision.

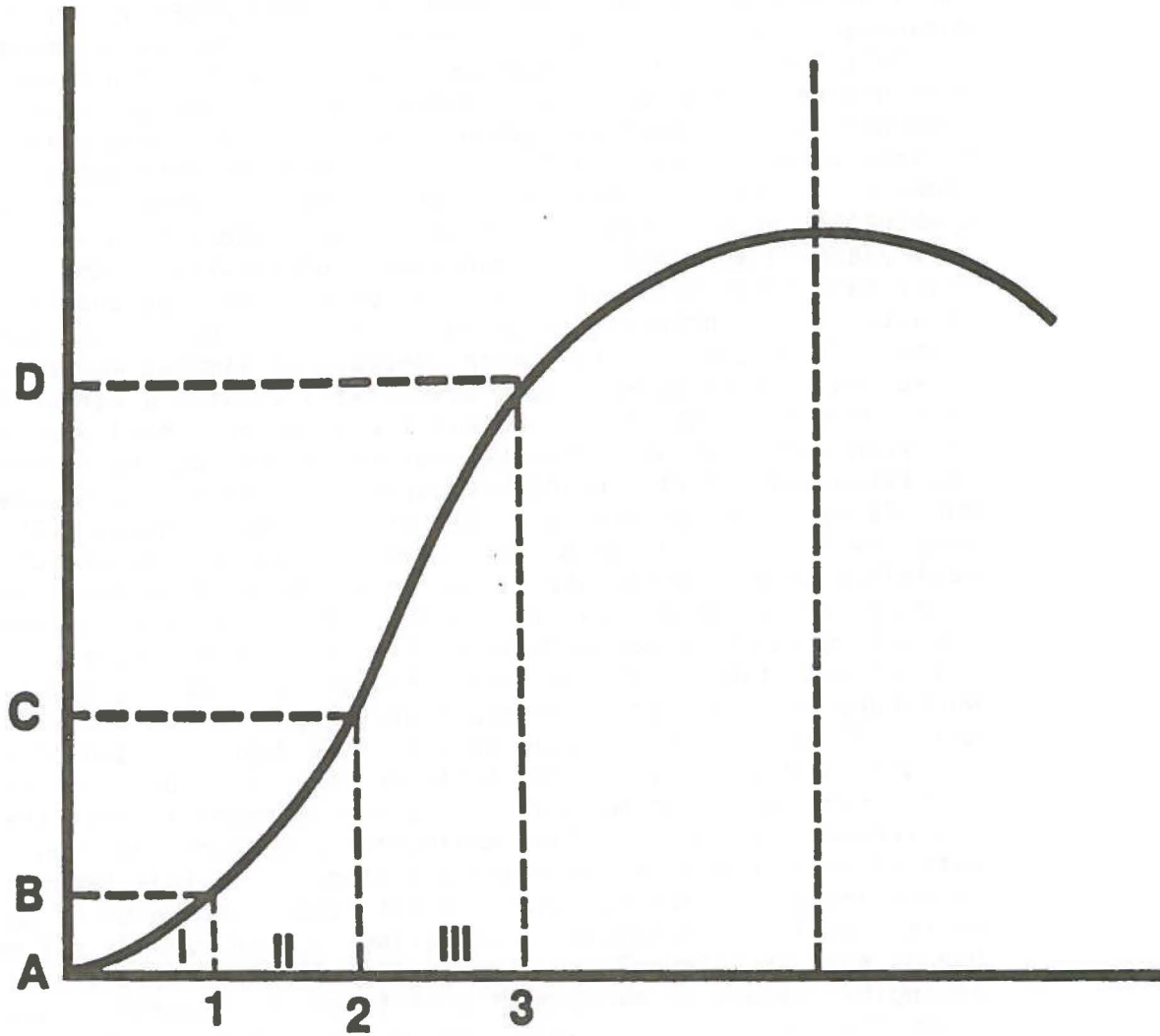
K. With continuing advances in computer and communications technology, there has been on-going development of refined, complicated, and powerful decisionmaking tools and procedures. To effectively utilize many of these computerized tools, the farm decisionmaker faces the challenge of inputting increasing amounts of data (which also needs an increasing accuracy dimension) and to make a number of "runs" of possible outcomes as key variables are changed. This complexity of use especially exists with the various planning programs that also are integrated with the preparation of financial

statements including cash flow projections. One of the newer complex and challenging models which is of particular interest to me, is a "whole farm" risk management program which has been developed as part of a special ES project financed with Federal Crop Insurance funds under the coordination of Roy Black, Michigan State, and also involving Minnesota, Kentucky, and Kansas personnel. This risk management model which can analyze various combinations of crop insurance and forward selling alternatives for up to four crop enterprises, was demonstrated at the Extension session of AAEE at Cornell last summer.

The implications for the need for more farm management work, and the size of the farm management job from the various considerations mentioned above together with all of the traditional areas of farm management educational work (such as record keeping and analyses, partial budgeting, enterprise cost and return information, overall farm business planning, tax management, farm business arrangements, etc.) places special importance to this topic of "Accomplishing More with Less" in farm management! However, in my view there seems to be two general priority directions which are needed for farm management programs given the current and longer-term environment facing agriculture. First, programming to meet the need for a very intense and in-depth individual management assistance to be provided for farmers. Second, programming to meet the need to provide a larger number of farmers with this intensive, in-depth management assistance. As farm management specialists, we have been very confident that many farmers have, and many more could be greatly benefited by Extension programs that provide this intensive individual farm management assistance. It is not meant to infer that more extensive types of Extension farm management program work are not useful.

However, I want to lay out a particular rationale for giving priority emphasis to farm management programs providing farmers with intensive management assistance. (Many of you have previously heard my thinking along this line. Apology is made for this, but on the other hand, it seems that the continuing developments pertaining to the management of a farm business make the case for the need and benefits of intensive management assistance continually stronger.). The use of the increasing production function concept in the accompanying figure is used to illustrate the need and benefits of intensive assistance to the individual farmer (this figure has also been used in previous presentations). In the concept which is visualized in the figure, the focus is meant to be on the large major farm management decisions. As a farmer starts to think about these more significant decisions, he usually starts to gather information of a general nature from various sources such as neighbors, observing other farms, from the mass media, magazines, other publications, etc. This is portrayed by the distance, AI on the horizontal scale. It is hypothesized that generally if a farmer makes a decision from only this amount of input into the information gathering and analyzing process for a major decision, that the chances of his obtaining a successful result is equivalent to the distance AB on the vertical scale as shown in the figure. This distance of AB reflects a relatively low probability of obtaining successful results. However, farmers will hopefully put additional management effort into obtaining and analyzing alternatives prior to making these major management decisions. The distance on the horizontal scale between points 1 and 2 represents this additional intensive effort by the individual farmer in such activities as going to Extension meetings or participating in intensive

**DEGREE OF
SUCCESSFUL
RESULTS IN
TERMS OF
GOALS ACHIEVED
FROM A GIVEN
MANAGEMENT
DECISION**



INPUTS FOR SIGNIFICANT MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

I	II	III
NEIGHBORS	MEETINGS	ONE ON ONE
FARM VISITS	INTENSIVE	PROFESSIONAL
MASS MEDIA	WORKSHOPS	FARM
MAGAZINES	TOURS	MANAGEMENT
PUBLICATIONS	FARM VISITS	ASSISTANCE

workshops, going on farm tours and other intensive contact with other individuals who have made similar decisions previously. If the farmer then proceeds to make a decision based on this additional second component of management input, then his chances of obtaining successful results are greatly enhanced as indicated on the figure by the distance BC on the vertical scale. The most critical and key aspects of this increasing production function concept is portrayed when the farmer makes the third input of management effort as visualized on the horizontal scale between points 2 and 3. This third level of management input consists of his proceeding to obtain some degree of one on one assistance (this may include small group sessions) from professional farm management personnel, including Extension specialists or some other professionally trained farm management persons from whom he chooses to seek farm management counseling. It appears that when this combination of some type of one-on-one assistance involves the utilization of farm planning and other farm management procedures to deal with whatever the major management decision is at that point, then the chances for successful results are tremendously enhanced as indicated by the increasing returns segment CD on the vertical scale. Because of limited manpower most of our Extension farm management work essentially assists a farmer through the second level of management input. Unless there is individualized followup, our in-depth workshops may often be leaving farmers at the second level. However, the Extension efforts during the current financial crisis have assisted a lot more farmers through the level III of management inputs. It is my view that very few farmers will actually proceed to utilize and effectively make decisions involving the use of our more complex farm management procedures such as farm or budgeting, etc. unless they have received some type of counseling which is approximately of a one-on-one nature. This one-on-one type of assistance might be given through very small group type meetings or workshops or larger group in-depth workshops. Group assistance in many cases may still have to be followed up with some degree or amount of one-on-one assistance across the kitchen table or what not. But, the key observation that I have made from my years in farm management is that there have been very few farmers that use our farm management procedures and tools successfully without some degree of intensive assistance. If this hypothesis of the increasing production function concept about the value of one-on-one type of professional farm management counseling is true, why do not more farmers make use of such assistance? My view is that it is because of the highly intangible nature of management assistance as compared to paying for tangible items like fertilizer, or even the services of a tax preparer to file tax returns.

Another item that pertains to priority and direction of future farm management programs is an ECOP publication entitled "Regaining Farm Profitability in American Agriculture" that was recently prepared and distributed to Extension staff around the country. A number of you have indicated to me that you have seen this publication and studied it to some extent. It focuses on the need for shifting Extension programming toward the use of a strong interdisciplinary systems approach in assisting farmers to increase or restore their "profitability." Also, this publication indicates that Extension programming should thoroughly emphasize economic and profitability (marketing & management) considerations in making production technology decisions, and to do so in line with an objective of increasing overall profitability of the

farm business. The subject of "Regaining Farm Profitability" will be utilized in describing the future direction of Extension programs in budget justifications.

It is my observation that many farm management specialists are somewhat confused by the appearance of this publication. Farm management programs throughout their history have sought the same general objectives of utilizing appropriate interdisciplinary subject matter, and using it in a framework for increasing income for the total farm system. It is often charged that farm management specialists do not work sufficiently with other specialists as they carry out their efforts to assist farmers in increasing their economic efficiency and in assisting them to achieve high levels of net income. However, I contend that farm management specialists generally do involve and get the support and assistance of the relevant subject specialists for the technology and practices that are being considered for each enterprise. Also, it has been basic to overall farm planning and to any associated intensive assistance to individual farmers to give a reasonable amount of consideration to marketing alternatives in trying to determine the most profitable way to operate a given farm business. However, in spite of the possible confusion, or questions about the sudden appearance of this publication, I feel that farm management specialists welcome this strong emphasis and redirecting, or reshaping the direction of Extension work generally under the basic umbrella of achieving economic efficiency and overall farm profitability.

The topics covered in this paper up to this point may be considered as part of the situational setting for the question of how can we accomplish more farm management educational work with less resources. Still further, there are two basic areas of assumptions that should be reviewed again before we start to see if we can find realistic answers to this question. The first area of assumption pertains to the notion of a great and growing need for use of Extension farm management resources to provide intensive management assistance to individual farmers. It is my general observation and belief that providing this intensive assistance will be far more productive in terms of successful achievement of farmers goals per dollar of Extension resources utilized than is accomplished with the traditional, more extensive, type of Extension farm management efforts. However, extensive efforts (such as one-shot meetings, preparation and distribution of enterprise budgets, farm management newsletters, mass media presentations, etc.) have very essential and necessary basic roles in a state's overall farm management program. These extensive efforts may also be utilized to complement or to facilitate carrying out intensive farm management assistance programs.

The second area of assumptions is based on the probability that there will not be any significant increase in tax supported funding forthcoming to the total Extension program. The odds seem high that tax base support will decline in coming years. However, there is the option of shifting an increased proportion of existing Extension resources to the Extension farm management program area. The possibility that this will occur may be brighter in view of the current financial crisis which has already resulted in at least temporary shifts in some states. Also the emphasis (which was mentioned earlier) on the use of the term "profitability" in connection with new directions in Extension programming may lead to some resource shifts. This may not necessarily be

as increasing resources in farm management programs. But, objectives of a "profitability" Extension program thrust should be identical with the objectives of Extension farm management programs.

There appear to be definitely limited alternatives which would lead to strengthening or expanding Extension farm management program effort--especially with reduced resources. Even if Extension were to receive some increase in funding and/or if there were significant internal reallocation of resources to farm management programs, it is difficult to visualize that this would result in any substantially larger number of Extension farm management specialists being employed at either the state or area levels. Furthermore, any such increase in specialist manpower would seem to fall far short of the manpower needed to provide per se the intensive farm management assistance which we have been discussing. Thus, it appears that most alternatives for achieving any significantly larger amount of Extension farm management work would have to revolve around essentially a "multiplier" affect from the work of the existing core of Extension farm management specialists. This in turn means that from some source additional resources represented by manpower, facilities, travel funds, etc. must be involved in order to obtain this "multiplier" effect of farm management specialists. Thus, in my view, this means that the topic that was assigned to this paper needs to be changed to something along the line of "possible ways of expanding and strengthening farm management Extension work, and making more effective use of the limited number of Extension Farm Management Specialists."

Under this somewhat changed topic, some of my thoughts on some alternative courses of actions for strengthening and expanding the amount of intensive farm management assistance provided for farmers are as follows:

1. Farm management associations offer one of the most effective ways of providing intensive management assistance to farm families and at the same time minimize taxpayer cost. Many of you are well aware of my strong support of this type of program and that it goes back through many years. It is very difficult not to be impressed by the results and potential for this type of program when you observe, for example, the continued growth of farm management associations in Illinois to around 8,000 members. However, it is also my view that the farm management association type program can be further strengthened in many cases. In particular, associations might operate in a manner which would maximize the use of a fieldman's time in providing intensive management assistance, minimize the amount of his time spent in the mechanics of record keeping, and eliminate preparation of tax returns. In my opinion there is a strong need for some applied research type projects to explore and study alternative operating procedures, and institutional arrangements for improving the effectiveness of providing management assistance through the farm management association approach. This applied research should also focus on ways to improve the channeling of information from the various Extension and research subject matter specialists through the fieldman so that the so called total interdisciplinary and farm systems approach as visualized in the "profitability" concept effectively reaches the farmer. In my view the existing farm management association program is the best current mechanism for

the interdisciplinary expertise of the Extension-Land Grant College complex into an integrated or systems package for use in individual farmer decisionmaking. It is recognized that in some states there are severe political obstacles to the possible organization of farm management associations. But on the other hand, these political obstacles might be overcome by more conviction and determination on the part of Farm Management Specialists and Extension Administrators to seek ways of getting their foot in the door in implementing farm management association work.

2. The use of highly intensive workshops, including the use of "electronic conferencing," has been increasingly used to provide intensive farm management assistance to farm families. For many individual farmers these intensive workshops need some degree of individualized follow-up. This may be carried out in small group meetings as well as one-on-one methods in order to effectively analyze and/or complete the farm management decisionmaking procedures taught in the workshop. Reports indicate that this type of intensive workshop and followup efforts have been very successfully used during the recent months of the farm financial crisis. Also, it appears that many states have been very successful in finding various ways of obtaining additional manpower to assist, particularly in the individualized follow-up efforts. This has included the use of highly qualified temporary personnel, county agents, the use of banker and VoAg personnel, and personnel from other organizations. However, to further expand the number of intensive workshops conducted in a given state will of course require additional resources in most state situations. In my view, Extension should not hesitate to charge adequate fees to cover all variable costs in operating these workshops so that there will be a pool of resources available for operating a larger size program and reach a larger total audience. It is noted that the "profitability" publication indicates that in-depth workshops will be conducted to carry out that program.
3. Redirection of the program of county Extension personnel to contain a much larger proportion of farm management work can achieve a substantial increase in a state's and county's total farm management programs. Our reports indicate that some states have already moved to make significant redirections of county personnel responsibilities towards the farm financial management area, and that other states are making plans to do so. This redirection was particularly reported in gathering the accomplishment data from the 12 states which was included in the "Cooperative Extension and Agricultural Profitability--Fighting Farm Financial Crisis on the Front Line" March 1985 report. One state estimated that 55 percent of total Extension resources would be used in 1985 on programs dealing with the financial crisis. Larry Bitney informed me recently that in recent program planning efforts 76 out of 80 county planning units placed financial management as top priority for the year ahead. For a good many years North Central states have utilized area farm management specialists or agents, and a few states have had county

personnel with the title of management agents. However, in this current redirection movement it is suggested that states might consider assigning increased numbers of county staff to have titles as specialized management agents. In some cases these agents might work across county lines and overlap with other management agents on a "type of farming" division of the work. Although such a redirection of county personnel programs will tend to increase the responsibility of the state farm management specialists training and serving them, it might be possible to do so without significantly increasing the number of state specialists.

4. Employment of personnel on Extension Farm Management staffs who have had MS degrees or less of formal training may be seriously considered as a way of strengthening and expanding the programs conducted by state specialists. (Larry Bitney, Nebraska, was particularly helpful in suggesting this as an effective alternative for expanding programs.) Some states appear to be very successfully utilizing such personnel to carry out specific farm management assignments and perform detailed work essential to programs being conducted by state specialists. The work carried out by such personnel may permit state specialists to make far more efficient use of their time. In addition to the approach above, it is also my observation, that over the years, area specialists and some state specialists who have formal training at the masters level or less have been extremely productive in their farm management work. In fact, it is my further observation that area farm management agents and farm management association fieldmen often become what might be called "super" farm management specialists for dealing with management problems of clientele in their local area. Thus, to put it bluntly, farm management programs might be expanded at less cost by employing personnel with less formal training whether they are used to provide direct support to specialists, or in directly carrying out programs in the field.
5. The wholesaling of farm management programs and information through other organizations and their professional personnel might be considered as a more ultimate "multiplier" approach. As we all know, farm management specialists over the years have provided training and information to personnel of agricultural lending organizations, VoAg instructors, personnel of private farm managers organizations, etc. It has been expected that these personnel will in some degree utilize this information and training to assist farm people with their farm management problems and needs. This type of program--especially for agricultural lending organization personnel, has certainly been increasing in the last few years. But, Extension may need to become more aggressive. It is of much interest to me that when our office sent out the criteria for special project proposals for funding from the special \$1 million appropriation last fall, one criteria listed was that of a multiplier effect by conducting programs with other organization personnel who would in turn provide intensive individual financial assistance during the current crisis situation. It was

somewhat puzzling to find out that only a very few of the 46 proposals submitted specific plans for providing intensive assistance through a multiplier approach. Obviously such professional personnel have to be available in the state and be receptive to cooperating with Extension in this type of program. Also, providing the degree of intensive assistance visualized earlier, may not suit the objectives of their organization. However, in spite of all of this, it appears there may be much more potential for farm management specialists to take stronger leadership in conducting programs which will achieve this multiplier effect. But, a counter-balancing consideration is the question of maintaining Extension's visibility with the farmer audience and consequently receiving appropriate political support. It is easy to understand why Extension in some situations may be reluctant to devote more effort to working through other organizations when there is not fair and reasonable cooperation in giving Extension credit for their contribution to the program which that organization conducts directly with farmers.

6. Greatly accelerating the multi-state use of state specialists might increase efficiency of limited Extension resources and contribute to the size of the total farm management program effort. There are many Extension specialists, including farm management specialists, who have become highly recognized across state lines for their expertise in a specific area of their subject matter discipline. There has been some multi-state exchange of state specialists--especially in the computer area in recent years. However, in general Extension has not been very aggressive and innovative in implementing exchange arrangements or utilizing specialists on a multi-state basis. If mechanisms could be worked out, it would seem to encourage the development of many more highly specialized specialists and preparation of educational materials on a multi-state basis, as well as conducting programs in some cases on a multi-state basis. Most ES special projects have had as part of their objective to achieve multi-state sharing of specialist expertise, and multi-state sharing of educational materials developed in these projects. The risk management and crop insurance projects mentioned earlier are examples. Also, in recent years ES has utilized a "New Models" approach to employ personnel who remain at their state location, but performed responsibilities on a national basis.
7. A continuation of the increasing use of the various capabilities of electronic and communications technology will contribute to the volume of and effectiveness of Extension farm management work. Resources, of course, must be found for making these tools available. But, it appears that when effective uses are demonstrated the Extension system has been able to come up with much of the needed resources. It was mentioned that some states are using tele- or video conferencing to assist in conducting in-depth workshops. Various types of electronic conferencing may well be expanded and also explored on a multi-state basis. In my opinion, farm management specialists need to continue their leadership in developing computer applications which will assist farmer decisionmaking. A big challenge in regard to computer farm management software is a desire of farm people to be able to turn to

you for objective pro and con information on commercially vended software. It is my feeling that the acquiring of such evaluation information for use in Extension programs is an area where multi-state Extension efforts would be of great benefit and would permit more efficient use of our limited resources.

Another possible use of electronic technology that I would like to explore is the establishment of an Extension specialists data base with a farm management component. This would likely need a lot of testing and be developed slowly. But, it is visualized that this data base would contain the latest thinking, materials, etc. of specialists around the country. Such a data base might be especially useful to area and county field staff. If such a data base did start to become operationally effective, there would be some problems of how the public would be allowed to directly access the data base. However, if such a data base was made to be operationally up-to-date with constant input from the whole range of subject matter specialists, it would tend to establish a high degree of leadership identity in the eyes of the agricultural public.

The new interactive video disc micro-computer technology seems to have many exciting possibilities for use by farm management and by all Extension as another tool to provide training and information to farmers. A number of reports indicate that the interest in and actual use of this technology is exploding. There would seem to be excellent opportunities for this technology to be used for self-teaching of a farm management decisionmaking procedure, and then would lead the farmer step-by-step on to completing the procedure for his own farm. The completed procedure which might be a cashflow projection, for example, could then be printed out with a printer attached to the micro. The use of such video disc micro-computer programs for assisting farmers might need to be limited to such environments where a professional person such as a farm management specialist, a county agent, or a bank loan officer would be in the vicinity and could be called on for help when needed.

In conclusion, it seems that your efforts together with current redirection of Extension programs towards more emphasis on farm management, and the related "profitability" program direction that is being talked about, may be fundamental to Extension's future role and existence. It seems essential that the public's image of Extension be changed from that of facilitating production to that of "assisting farmers to increase efficiency and income, and achieve other personal goals." There has already been much progress in recent years in making this change in the orientation of Extension programs. However, the public probably still associates Extension's primary role and accomplishments with that of increasing agricultural production--which translates into surpluses. Changing Extension's image to that of an organization whose programs provide assistance to farm people in the use of their resources in increase income and achieve family goals, would seem to be basic to maintaining public support and confidence in Extension. But, more importantly, if farm people did have this image more fully in their minds, they would more aggressively seek and use Extension's assistance--and as a result make more successful decisions.