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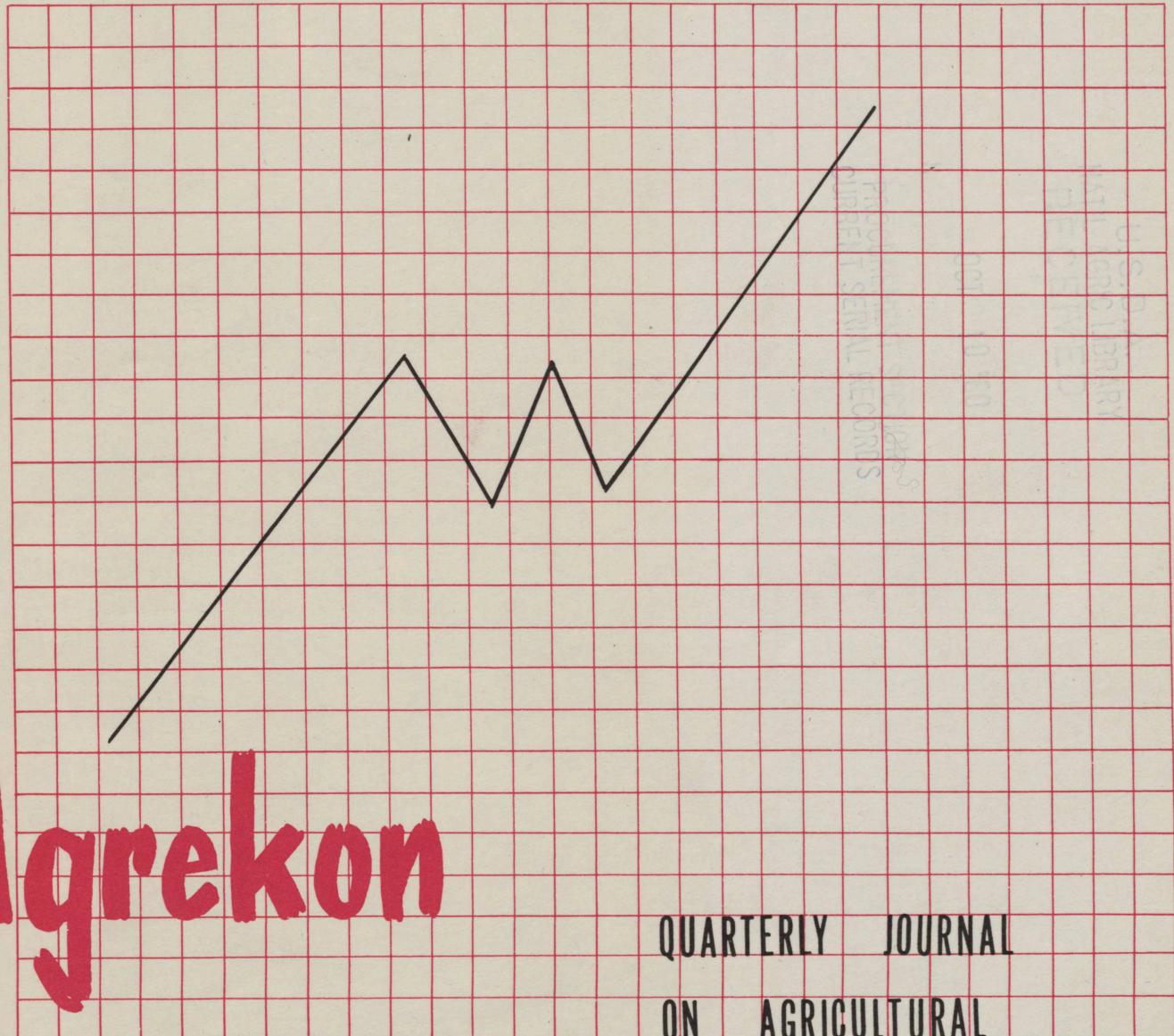
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THE PART-TIME FARMER: CONTRIBUTION, PROBLEMS AND FUTURE

by

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INTRODUCTION

As the process of development is accompanied with change in every field and sphere of life, so also, with the passing of time, drastic changes have taken place in the forms of agricultural enterprise. It is no longer the traditional "farmer" only who provides the population with food and fibre, but a large variety of individuals and groups of individuals. Therefore it is logical to expect that reconsideration and evaluation of agricultural policy will also follow in the light of the changed circumstances. Besides the full-time so-called *bona fide* farmer, the following types of "farmers" may be cited by way of example:

- the part-time farmer;
- the small-holdings farmer;
- the company within agriculture;
- the company outside agriculture but which also has interests in farming;
- the professional city man who has farming interests;
- lessees of arable land

What the relative importance of each of these enterprise forms is, would be difficult to determine. Nor will it be attempted at this stage to give a decision on the right of existence of each, although an evaluation might be necessary later. The role and significance of the part-time farmer as one of the many forms of enterprise will now be elucidated further.

EXPOSITION OF PERSPECTIVE

There are differences in perception about the concept of part-time farming. It is virtually impossible to give a generally applicable definition for it, because the premises on which a concept of this may be built are of a divergent nature. Part-time farming may assume a different meaning when viewed against the background of the family income of farmers than when it is considered in the context of production efficiency, military preparedness, political considerations or social problems.

In South Africa there is no official definition for part-time farming. However, an analysis of the concept

bona fide farming enables one to establish a concept of part-time farming by way of deduction. According to the Department of Agricultural Credit and Land Tenure⁽¹⁾, the South African Agricultural Union⁽²⁾ and the Land and Agricultural Bank of South Africa⁽³⁾ *bona fide* or full-time farming is characterised by a number of characteristics and concepts which may be summarised briefly as follows:

- It requires the undivided attention of an agricultural entrepreneur. "Undivided attention" is probably applicable only to the practise of other occupations and professions, because the practise of hobbies or participation in community life requires attention and forms part of the activities of any normal person in society.
- Farming constitutes the sole source of income of the entrepreneur. For the purpose of financial aid a relatively small income derived from additional sources will probably be permitted (e.g. combining or selling paintings painted as a hobby.) A relatively high income from e.g. the leasing of property, and interest on investments will disqualify an entrepreneur for a full-time farmer, although these activities require little attention.
- The personal occupation and cultivation of the farm by entrepreneur is a prerequisite for full-time farming. Entrepreneurs with two or more farms cannot occupy all the properties simultaneously, and for the farmer who owns several farms in a district it might be more practical to stay in town and manage his farming from that central point. This principle is found in the moshav and kibbutz systems, for example, and might be put into practice in South Africa in the planning of new irrigation schemes or the settlement of farmers in remote border areas where the safety factor makes it advisable for farmers' families to live together in community centres.
- Family farming is identified with *bona fide* farming. It is assumed that every member of the family should have a part in the farming. Although farm-

ing in South Africa is to a great extent directed at the utilisation of Black and Coloured labour it might happen that urbanisation and the development of homelands could in the future force the white entrepreneur to rely more and more on his family for the handling of farming tasks. This accent on family farming does not, however, disqualify certain forms of company farming for financial aid by the state.

The above-mentioned characteristics of the concept of full-time farming and a study of the literature make it possible to identify the following dimensions of part-time farming:

The seat of non-farming income

The part-time farmer's family is not dependent on farming alone for a family income. Krasovec⁽⁴⁾ points out that in some cases agricultural entrepreneurs are classified as part-time farmers only when the bread-winner has another occupation besides farming, whereas in countries such as Japan and the U.S.A. it is customary to classify farming as part-time when any of the family members has a non-farming income. When part-time farming is discussed against the background of production efficiency, it is possible to classify cases where only the South African farmer's wife works outside farming as full-time, because she need not play the same role in family farming as for example, her counterpart in European countries. The seat of non-farming income is, however, accepted as a dimension of part-time farming since the non-farming income of any member of the part-time farmer's family will have an effect on the family's standard of living.

The part-timeness of the outside occupation

That part of the available time taken up by the outside occupation of the part-time farmer may vary according to its nature. If production efficiency is the criterion, it can be argued that the professional person who farms as well has to devote so much time to his non-farming activities that the necessary time is not available for him to give sufficient attention to farming. It should also be noted that farmers' families who have an additional source of income (e.g. a pension fund), the management of which takes up no time, could possibly be regarded as full-time farmers. In overseas countries a distinction is made between part-time farmers having full-time or only sporadic outside employment (migrant, seasonal labour) besides farming (Chrosswhite⁽⁵⁾; Walker⁽⁶⁾). *Bona fide* South African farmers are sometimes allowed temporary employment besides farming (e.g. to cope with drought) while they are making use of official or semi-official agricultural financing. On the other hand, farmers who devote much time to community service (e.g. organised agriculture) are regarded as full-time farmers.

The occupation of the farm

The provision of agricultural credit in South Africa is aimed at encouraging the personal occupation of the farm. Although this principle is not applied in cases where farmers stay together in community centres and although it is impossible for farmers who own more than one farm to occupy all of them personally, it might be argued that farmers who, with the present-day communication systems, do not live within easy reach of their farms cannot meet with the norm of production efficiency due to inadequate management input.

The relative importance of the occupations

The possibility exists that the professional person with a practice that serves as his principal source of income will devote less attention to his farming than the part-time farmer for whom farming is the more important of the occupations. The Land and Agricultural Bank of South Africa⁽³⁾ considers entrepreneurs who are dependent solely on farming for a livelihood to be full-time farmers whereas for the purpose of census-taking families in the United States of America are classified as part-time when the non-farming income exceeds the total value of farm-produced products (Chrosswhite⁽⁵⁾). It is necessary to point out, however, that the relative financial contribution of the various occupations would not necessarily be the only criterion by which the percentual importance of occupations of part-time farmers would be judged. Non-material considerations, such as a love for farming, may play a substantial role.

The migration tendency of part-time farmers

Part-time farming is regarded as an important intermediate step for the migration of small farmers to other sectors of the economy (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development⁽⁷⁾). However, when the sociological process of migration is studied, it is clear that there can also be a reflux of immigrants to agriculture via part-time farming (Jackson⁽⁸⁾). Those who are embarking upon full-time farming might devote more attention to farming than those who wish to leave the farm.

The classification of the outside occupation

Certain Dutch authors sometimes distinguish between types of part-time farmers according to the nature of the non-farming occupation (Everaert⁽⁹⁾). Part-time farmers with outside occupations of an agricultural nature might, on account of their training and circumstances, farm more efficiently than those who have had no agricultural training or who are unable, due to the nature of the outside occupation, to visit the farm frequently.

Small-holdings

The occupants of small-holdings are quite often identified with small farmers or part-time farmers. Small-holdings could indeed be considered a dimension of part-time farming since arable land is used here mainly for residential purposes. Small-holdings create a social problem of its own, however, and this has repeatedly been inquired into by the State and studied by researchers (Kuschke⁽¹⁰⁾; Tomlinson⁽¹¹⁾; Kotze⁽¹²⁾). Because market oriented agricultural production is seldom practised on small-holdings it is difficult to evaluate its influence on family income and production efficiency and therefore farming on small-holdings is not included for the purpose of an inquiry into part-time farming (Oendaal⁽¹³⁾). In his study of rural reform Du Plessis⁽¹⁴⁾ also came to the conclusion that the almost 10 000 small-holdings in the vicinity of large cities do not form part of the farming situation in South Africa.

The identified dimensions of part-time farming mentioned above enables one to identify in practice certain ideal types of part-time farmers by means of a main component analysis. As a result of a study⁽¹³⁾ involving 250 part-time farmers in 24 magisterial districts of the eastern Cape Province the following ideal types of part-time farmers, each with unique characteristics, were identified:

- Those embarking upon the agricultural industry who possess desirable characteristics such as good training, a high aptitude for management, relative youth and initiative, who have another occupation besides farming to supplement the family income until the initial years of adjustment are bridged (20 per cent).
- Entrepreneurs usually farming on marginal farm units and who supplement their family income by another occupation besides farming in order to maintain a set standard of living (7 per cent).
- Agricultural entrepreneurs who possess less desirable personality traits and who are migrating to other sectors of the economy by using part-time farming as an intermediate step in this process (6 per cent).
- Workers outside agriculture who farm as well and who are not necessarily dependent on an income from agriculture for a living (42 per cent).

What these four ideal types of part-time farmers have in common is that the bread-winner himself is involved with more than one occupational activity. When the general premises set out for the discussion of part-time farming are applied, however, it is possible to define two further ideal types:

- Farming enterprises where the bread-winner himself is a full-time farmer while his wife also has a

non-farming occupation through which the family income is supplemented (25 per cent).

Occupants of small-holdings who do not practise market oriented agricultural production and who use arable land mainly for residential purposes. Occupants of small-holdings are excluded from the calculation of the percentages mentioned above, and for the purpose of further discussion farming on small-holdings will not be referred to again.

CONTRIBUTION

Now that the concept of part-time farming has been defined more closely, other relevant aspects of this form of enterprise in agriculture can be referred to. The contribution of part-time farming to the agricultural industry will be discussed under four headings:

The incidence and extent of part-time farming

Part-time farming occurs in countries with capitalistic and socialist economic systems, as well as in countries with developed and developing economies. The percentage of part-time farmers varies between 20 and 60 per cent of all entrepreneurs in agriculture. By definition 17,3 per cent of all agricultural entrepreneurs in the eastern Cape Province can be described as part-time farmers while they control 19,2 per cent of the surface of all arable land⁽¹⁵⁾. Part-time farmers are therefore not necessarily small farmers.

After the necessary adjustments have been made in the data to obtain a general equation it would appear that part-time farmers contribute even more than 20 per cent to the gross value of agricultural production in the same region. This data indicates that part-time farmers in certain areas of the eastern Cape Province per definition play a significant part in the farming sector of the area and that they produce even more efficiently than the average farmer. There is no reason why the same tendency should not exist in most of the other farming regions in South Africa — especially in areas offering more work opportunities outside agriculture.

The family income of part-time farmers

Having a non-farming income contributes considerably to an increase in the family income of part-time farmers (Table 1). It enables the part-time farmer to maintain an acceptable standard of living. It can also be shown that part-time farmers with a low farming income usually have a relatively high non-farming income and vice versa. A study of the distribution of income of part-time farmers involuntarily leads one to the conclusion that part-time farming may serve as an important auxiliary measure to help relieve the problem of low income among farmers.

Production efficiency

Otherwise than would be expected normally no evidence was found that part-time farmers mismanage

the potential of the natural resources at their disposal. By means of various statistical techniques it can be shown that certain mediatorial variables such as an aptitude for management, training, farm size and farming area, as in the case of the average farmer, are responsible for the variation (or the lack of it) occurring in the criteria for excellence.

TABLE 1 - The contribution of various sources of income to the total family income of part-time farmers in certain areas of the eastern Cape Province, 1974(a)

Source of income	Arithmetic mean	Percentage of total family income	Respondents per source of income	
			Number	%
Non-farming income: farmer	4 344	36,7	202	80,8
Non-farming income: wife	1 275	10,8	116	46,4
Other non-farming income (b)	814	6,9	101	40,4
Total non-farming income	6 433	54,4	250	100,0
Net farming income (c)	5 402	45,6	250	100,0
Total family income	11 835	100,0	250	100,0

(a) Odendaal(13)

(b) Interest on investments, other properties leased

(c) Calculated from gross farming income according to Hattingh(16) who points out that an analysis of the farming records of 10 study groups in different areas of the area studied indicate that net farming income on an average amounts to about 45 per cent of the gross farming income

The dimensions of part-time farming play only an exceedingly small role as independent variables with regard to criteria such as production efficiency, conservation awareness and management efficiency. The occupation of the farm is used as an example in Table 2.

TABLE 2 - Livestock population according to farm occupation for part-time farmers in certain areas of the eastern Cape Province, 1974

ha)	Livestock population from the farm (SSU/100)					
	A: Living on farm		B: < 30 km		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<50	13	10,9	6	15,0	21	53,8
50-99	37	31,1	12	30,0	8	20,5
100-149	25	21,0	7	17,5	5	12,8
150-199	18	15,1	7	17,5	3	7,7
200 and more	16	21,9	8	20,0	2	5,2
Total	119	100,0	40	100,0	39	100,0
Arithmetic mean	144,3		161,0		71,5	
					133,3	

Chi-square = 35,8726; p = 0,0001; degrees of freedom = 8

Correlation coefficient = 0,2105; p < 0,01; degrees of freedom = 196

Correlation ratio = 0,2950

F value = 37,1792; p < 0,01; degrees of freedom = 2 x 195

Although there are highly significant associations between the distance part-time farmers live from their farms and livestock population (one of the criteria for conservation awareness), it can be demonstrated that the differences among the categories may be attributed to participation in the livestock reduction scheme (which is no longer applicable at this stage), farm size and the potential of the farming area. Occupation of the farm, or otherwise, is directly responsible for only about 0,14 per cent of the variation in livestock population and therefore has no significant influence on the criterion for conservation awareness concerned. Similar results were obtained in respect of other criteria.

A further example is instanced in Table 3 to illustrate the findings in respect of production efficiency.

TABLE 3 - Gross farming income per hectare according to the part-timeness of the outside occupation for part-time farmers in certain areas of the eastern Cape Province, 1974

Gross farming income per hectare	Respondents per category of part-timeness						
	A: 36 hours or more a week		B: 18-35 hours a week		C: < 18 hours a week		Total
	n	%	n	%	n	%	
<50/ha	27	20,0	3	9,1	3	10,0	33 16,7
R5,00-R9,99	36	26,7	10	30,3	8	26,7	54 27,3
R10,00-R14,99	22	16,3	4	12,1	3	10,0	29 14,6
R15,00 and more	50	37,0	16	48,5	16	53,3	82 41,4
Total	135	100,0	33	100,0	30	100,0	198 100,0
Arithmetic mean	R17,71/ha		R25,62/ha		R24,89/ha		R20,11/ha

Chi-square = 5,8585; p = 0,4392; degrees of freedom = 6

Correlation coefficient = 0,1269; p < 0,05; degrees of freedom = 196

Correlation ratio = 0,1415

F value = 7,9737; p < 0,01; degrees of freedom = 2 x 195

The data in Table 3 creates the impression that part-time farmers in category A who devote 36 hours a week or more (a full-time occupation) to occupational activities other than farming produce less efficiently than other part-time farmers who can devote more time theoretically to farming. An analysis of the influence of mediatorial variables on gross farming income per hectare as a criterion for production efficiency indicates, however, that aptitude for management and farm size are the most important factors influencing production efficiency. It would also appear that part-time farmers with a full-time occupation besides farming and who produce less efficiently despite better training (e.g. professional persons) display a lower aptitude for management, own smaller farms and have a lower gross farming income than otherwise. Of the two occupations farming is of lesser importance to them and receives less attention. This does not mean, therefore, that all part-time farmers who have a full-time occupation apart from

farming produce less efficiently. The part-timeness of the outside occupation is directly responsible for less than one per cent of the variation in the dependent variables. The general impression one gets is that part-time farmers in general and certain ideal types in particular, produce even more efficiently, due to desirable personal characteristics, than the average farmer.

Migration of farmers

It has indeed been established that part-time farming serves as an intermediate step for both immigration to and emigration from farming by entrepreneurs. For many entrepreneurs, however, part-time farming is a permanent form of enterprise in agriculture. The contribution this can make in the interest of rural reform and development to draw more desirable entrepreneurs to agriculture and to let less desirable entrepreneurs migrate to other sectors, should not be underrated.

Although the actual migration situation can only be evaluated as time passes, a fair impression of this can be gained from Table 4, in which a criterion of the migration direction against family expenditure was projected. At first glance it appears that the part-time farmers in category C tend to migrate to other sectors of the economy and that they maintain a lower standard of living than other categories. This is consistent with the accepted fact that financial considerations play a substantial part in determining the direction of and tendency towards migration of a person. It would furthermore appear that part-time farming to a greater extent serves as an intermediate step for the embarkation of entrepreneurs upon farming rather than otherwise, while a group of respondents accept part-time farming as a permanent situation.

TABLE 4 - Family expenditure in relation to the migration tendency for part-time farmers in certain areas of the eastern Cape Province, 1974

Family expenditure	Respondents per category of migration							
	A: Wishing to farm only		B: Both		C: Wishing to work otherwise only		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
<R3 000 per annum	19	15,7	9	13,4	5	55,6	33	16,8
R3 000 - R4 999	49	40,5	29	43,3	2	22,2	80	40,6
R5 000 and more	53	43,8	29	43,3	2	22,2	84	42,6
Total	121	100,0	67	100,0	9	100,0	197	100,0
Arithmetic mean	R5 516		R6 401		R3 342		R5 497	

Chi-square = 14,3600; p = 0,0729; degrees of freedom = 4

Correlation coefficient = -0,0441; p < 0,05; degrees of freedom = 195

Correlation ratio = 0,1739

F value = 12,1022; p < 0,01; degrees of freedom = 2 x 194

Two important ideal types for part-time farming are identified in relation to the concept of migration and it can be indicated that those who are quitting farming

(agricultural emigrants) reveal less desirable characteristics such as relatively advanced age, low level of training and low aptitude for management and who accordingly produce less efficiently. The livestock reduction scheme which was still in force at the time of the survey was employed as an important auxiliary measure in the emigration process. Those entering the field of agriculture, on the other hand, manifest desirable personality traits, farm efficiently and may be considered desirable entrepreneurs in agriculture. These entrepreneurs use part-time farming as a temporary measure to ensure an acceptable standard of living for the farmer's family during the initial years of adjustment.

PROBLEMS

Now that the concept and meaning of part-time farming have been defined more closely, certain relevant problems experienced with this form of enterprise can be reviewed. The following problems relating to part-time farming deserve mention:

Agricultural financing

With reference to the preceding discussion it can be said that one of the greatest problems experienced with part-time farming in South Africa is the fact that it is not considered an acceptable form of enterprise in agriculture. Except for soil conservation purposes, part-time farmers do not qualify for agricultural financing by the state. This obstructs the entry into the field of agriculture of young, enterprising farmers who want to use part-time farming to bridge the initial difficult years of adjustment in farming. In the United States of America special credit provision is made for this ideal type of part-time farmer (De Swardt⁽¹⁷⁾). Loans are even provided for the construction of residences for the young farmer's family, while the family members are allowed to utilise an additional source of income by having another occupation as well.

Agricultural extension

It has been established that the pattern of utilisation by part-time farmers of the communication channels available differs from the generally accepted pattern in agricultural extension⁽¹²⁾. The part-time farmer makes more use of fellow farmers and the mass media than does the average farmer. Group methods such as farmers' days and farming courses are exploited very poorly by part-time farmers since in most cases they have to work during the day. Agricultural extension agents from the private, co-operative and state sectors usually do not render their services in the evenings or over week-ends when it would suit the part-time farmer.

Farm management

Due to the physical absence of the bread-winner (and even his wife) from the part-time farming unit for shorter or longer periods, it is expected that certain problems might arise when the entrepreneur's personal

attention, supervision, urgent decision-making or action is required on the farm. As already indicated, the fact that production efficiency does not necessarily suffer when the farmer and/or his wife has an outside occupation, suggests that certain management adaptations are made to cope with expected management problems.

The part-time farmer arranges his affairs in such a way that he himself may be less involved with farming commitments where, for example, manual labour is required so that he can devote the time at his disposal to tasks such as decision-making and planning. Delegation of duties takes place and the farmer's wife and other farm labourers who can take responsibility play an important part in part-time farming.

Secondly it has been established that the part-time farmer tends to arrange his farming more labour-extensively. Dairy farming is usually abandoned in favour of beef farming which requires less labour and supervision. When a farmer starts an outside occupation the livestock population in the pasture often decreases. In farming areas with a low production potential this does not necessarily imply a decline in production efficiency — it might be that the requirements for optimal utilisation of the soil are met more adequately.

It can be reasonably expected, however, that certain types of part-time farming, where little time is available for farming, would not be beneficial for efficiency in cases of agricultural branches such as irrigation or intensive chicken or pig farming which are of a labour-intensive nature. However, in countries where at a given moment the struggle is against the problems of agricultural surpluses rather than shortages, the said considerations need not cause any policy problems.

Personal presence

In the Republic of South Africa White farmers on border farms are greatly relied upon to serve as early warning posts in the present military situation. In this connection it would seem that the personal presence of the White entrepreneur in certain areas is indeed important. If it is taken into consideration that rural terrorism in Southern Africa is still increasing, it might be advisable, however, with a view to the safety of the farmer's family to stay together in a community centre while the farm can be managed from a distance, especially in extensive farming regions.

There is concern in certain circles over the White: Black ratio which is becoming more and more unfavourable in some rural areas. It may be argued that the farms of part-time farmers which are occupied by Non-Whites only contribute to this. The counter-argument may also be stated, viz. that part-time farming enables more entrepreneurs to maintain a decent existence in rural areas and that it does not necessarily contribute to this "unbalance" in population figures.

The aforesaid arguments are cited to show that part-time farming does not necessarily hold only disadvantages and that the personal presence of the entrepreneur need not be an unconditional prerequisite.

FUTURE

Before certain projections and recommendations in connection with part-time farming will be made it would be fitting to point out that the findings and deductions recorded above are confirmed by the conclusions and observations of various authors in other countries, although these are not always supported by specific research. Gunn⁽¹⁸⁾, however, investigated part-time farming independently and his conclusions and findings coincide remarkably with those mentioned above. Therefore it can be accepted with reasonable certainty that the aforesaid deductions will also apply in other parts of South Africa.

In an ever developing economy entrepreneurs in a relatively slow-growing industry such as agriculture will increasingly have to face the problem of dragging incomes if their numbers do not decrease. Due to sociological and other reasons the number of farmers does not decrease in accordance with the tempo prescribed by economic law. Available statistics from overseas countries indicate that the absolute and relative numbers of part-time farmers are still increasing. With reference to an identified problem of low income among farmers in quite a number of rural areas of the Republic of South Africa it can be predicted with reasonable certainty that despite the fact that this form of enterprise is discouraged, part-time farming will also increase in extent in this country. It would seem that the greatest increase will occur in the ideal type of farming on marginal farming units where the farmer or his wife has to have an outside occupation to be able to maintain a set standard of living. It would also seem that more and more part-time farmers will assume full-time occupations outside the farm.

With reference to these projections it follows that according to expectation part-time farming will make an even greater contribution to the total agricultural production and that it will attain a more prominent role in the agricultural industry. Part-time farming, as well as other forms of agricultural enterprise therefore deserves more attention in terms of research and extension. Research into aspects of management might be one of the more practical fields of inquiry since part-time farmers and entrepreneurs employing some of the less conventional forms of agricultural enterprise are in need of guidance on how to adopt their management practices to the changed circumstances. Agricultural extension agents will again have to adjust themselves to involving the part-time farmer, for example more purposefully in extension actions, in that individual and group extension should also be presented in the evenings and during week-ends to reach entrepreneurs who are not available during normal working hours.

Unconventional forms of enterprise ought to be taken into consideration in the planning of rural reform and development plans. With regard to part-time farming entrepreneurs on marginal farm units, who have the necessary management ability, and circumstances, such

as available work opportunities, permitting, should even be encouraged to supplement their family income from sources other than farming. The ideal type of part-time farmer who can be described as embarking upon farming and who possesses desirable characteristics creates the opportunity for government bodies to stimulate the influx of sound human material into agriculture by means of the necessary aid measures. The provision of financial aid measures to young, enterprising entrepreneurs who also see their way clear to work at another occupation until the initial years of adjustment are bridged, should contribute to providing agriculture with more capable producers who can face the challenge of ever increased production. It might also help to draw more young farmers to farming areas where a distressing increase in the average age of the farming community is noticeable.

The identification of the ideal type of part-time farmer who may be labelled a farm leaver creates an opportunity whereby less desirable entrepreneurs may be encouraged to leave the agricultural industry. Financial incentives can accelerate the tempo at which this group of part-time farmers migrates away from agriculture. The past livestock reduction scheme is an example of an indirect method through which the number of "undesirable" cattle-farmers was reduced.

With the prospect that part-time farming and other unconventional forms of enterprise will increase in agriculture, it becomes essential that the state departments concerned now accept criteria whereby part-time farming, farming on small-holdings, company farming and others that might be relevant, may be classified for the purpose of census-taking. This will enable observers to keep an eye on developments in this field and enable policy makers to make the necessary adjustments bentimes so that the demands of the times may be met.

In conclusion it would seem that an increase in part-time farming and other forms of enterprise is a normal development within a free economic system. It should again, with an open mind, be subjected to the criteria for acceptability.

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