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HOW FARMERS VIEW AGRICULTURAL
AND FOOD POLICY ISSUES

by

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A composite report based upon coordinated research in ten states conducted by:

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The universities represented in this report are each members of National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges. Planning and coordination for this survey research was carried out during the 1980 annual meeting of the American Agricultural Economics Association and the National Public Policy Education Conference.

HOW FARMERS VIEW AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD POLICY ISSUES

Although producers of agricultural commodities are only one part of the population with concerns about the future directions of agricultural and food policy, they are one segment that has a very direct concern.

Research Procedure

Realizing the 1981 would be an important year in which policy decisions would have to be made on renewal or revision of the Food and Agriculture Act of 1977, agricultural economists in ten states developed a coordinated research plan to determine farmers' views on the current issues relative to pending legislation.

A questionnaire was developed jointly so that farmers in each participating state would be asked the same questions. Only slight variations were made to accommodate different commodities and organizations on a few questions.

State statisticians from the Federal-State Cooperative Crop Reporting Service assisted by drawing a sample of representative farm operators in each state where the survey was to be taken.

The questionnaires were mailed during the two weeks following election day, except in Nebraska where they were mailed in early January. Data was processed independently in each state using a comparable format so that data comparisons could be made.

A summary of the responses in each state is included at the end of this report along with a sample of the questionnaire.

Fair Prices for Farm Commodities

Over the years, many producer groups have called for "fair" prices for the products they produce. The most difficult part of this declaration is to determine what is fair. Responses to the questions dealing with fair prices for corn, wheat, soybeans, barley, sunflowers, hogs, choice steers, feeder steers and milk, in those states where these are major products, show considerable range in what farmers consider to be a fair price. The average price farmers considered "fair" is considerably above the current market

prices. Averages among the states also show variations. For example, the "fair" price for corn ranged from \$3.42 in Minnesota to \$3.97 in Texas. The national average price received by farmers for December was \$3.19.

The average price for wheat in 1981 which producers considered fair ranged from \$4.99 in Minnesota and Ohio to \$5.32 in North Dakota and Washington. The national average price farmers received in December was \$4.22 for all wheat.

The average "fair" price for soybeans suggested by respondents ranged from \$8.32 in Indiana to \$9.01 in Illinois. The average price received by farmers in December was \$7.80.

Average "fair" prices for barley were \$3.58 in Oregon and North Dakota and \$3.67 in Washington. The average price received by farmers in December was \$2.97.

Average "fair" prices for hogs ranged from \$53.76 per hundred pounds in Minnesota to \$57.27 in Nebraska. The average price received by farmers in December for barrows and gilts was \$44.80.

Average "fair" prices for choice steers ranged from \$73.53 in Minnesota to \$78.78 in Oregon. The national average price received by farmers in December was \$65.40 for steers and heifers.

The average "fair" price for Grade A milk varied from \$12.30 in North Dakota to \$14.28 in Nebraska. The average price for fluid milk received by farmers in December was \$14.30. Data for each state are shown in Table 1.

Recognizing that prices farmers pay for production items has been rising each year, it is understandable that most of their evaluations of fair prices are above the current market prices. The "fair" prices given for milk were closer to the average price actually received than for all other commodities.

Target Prices Recommended

The average target price for corn in 1980 was \$2.35. When asked for their recommendation for 1981, the responses ranged from \$3.01 in Minnesota to \$3.31 in Texas.

The average wheat target price in 1980 was \$3.63. The respondents' recommendations ranged from \$4.31 in Minnesota, Indiana and Ohio to \$4.63 in North Dakota.

The target price for barley in 1980 was \$2.55. Respondents in barley growing states recommended \$3.53 in North Dakota and Oregon and \$3.76 in Washington.

Since average target prices recommended for 1981 are above the actual target price in 1980, farmers may see the increase as a necessary protection to cover their cash costs of production. Details are shown in Table 2.

Eliminate target prices? A more significant issue during 1981 is whether target prices should be continued or eliminated in new legislation. When it was suggested that the target price program should be discontinued and more emphasis placed on the reserve program to support farm prices, considerably less than a majority supported this proposal. Agreement to discontinue target prices ranged from 13 percent in Washington to 35 percent in Indiana. The opposition to dropping target prices ranged from 23 percent in Oregon to 48 percent in North Dakota.

A substantial percentage in each state either had no opinion or did not answer this question. When the "no opinion" and "no answer" responses are added to agreement to discontinue target prices, the total comprises a majority of respondents in each state. Details are shown in Table 5.

Recommended Loan Rates

The average loan rate for 1980 corn was \$2.25 if not placed in the reserve. The recommended loan rate for 1981 ranged from \$2.74 in North Dakota to \$3.07 in Texas. The average loan rate for wheat in 1980 was \$3.63. The recommended loan rate for 1981 ranged from \$3.81 in Ohio to \$4.10 in North Dakota. With higher costs, and higher market price levels due to the shorter 1980 corn crop, it is not surprising to see higher recommended loan rates. Details are shown in Table 2.

Role of Government and Future Legislation

Since the 1977 Food and Agriculture Act expires in 1981, farmers were asked what they thought Congress should do about future legislation. In each state farmers were divided in their recommendations. The most frequent response in each state was to keep the present law with minor changes but only in North Dakota and Minnesota was this the majority response of all who returned questionnaires. The second most frequent response was to eliminate all price and income support programs with the percentage varying from 14 percent in Nebraska to 31 percent in Illinois and Oregon. A less frequent response was to develop totally new legislation with a range of 10 percent in Ohio to 16 percent in North Dakota. Another segment of the respondents,

ranging from 13 percent in Minnesota to 31 percent in Nebraska had no opinion or did not answer the question. Details are shown in Table 3.

Views on the Grain Reserve

Was it good for farmers? The 1977 Act established the farmer held grain reserve with release and call prices tied to a percentage of the loan rate. When asked if they thought the reserve was a good program for farmers, respondents had mixed reactions. In 8 of the 10 states more farmers agreed than disagreed that the program had been a good one for farmers. Only in Minnesota did a majority believe that it was a good program for farmers. The percentage that had no opinion or did not answer was rather substantial, ranging from 18 percent in Minnesota to 54 percent in Washington.

Was it good for consumers? A majority of respondents in 8 of the 10 states agreed that the reserve program had been a good program for consumers. However, the "no opinion" and "no answer" responses were relatively high, ranging from 25 percent in North Dakota to 54 percent in Washington.

The reasons for the reservations about the program for farmers probably result from the 3-year period that grain must be stored if release prices are not reached, the amount of storage payment which may not cover storage costs for some producers, and the stabilizing influence on prices when commodities are released and called from the reserve. Details are shown in Table 4.

Raise release prices? In all states, more respondents agreed than disagreed that they would like to see the release prices raised for feed grains, now set at 125 percent of the loan rate, and for wheat, now set at 140 percent of loan rate.

The reason why a substantial number of respondents did not have an opinion or did not answer the question was probably because they had no experience with the program, had not participated in the reserve, or were not eligible. There may also be a feeling that raising the release price might give market prices more latitude to move upward before farmers sold their grain and caused prices to level off.

A two price loan plan? The concept of a two price loan plan was implemented in the Agricultural Act of 1980. One loan rate was available to all farmers eligible, and a higher rate or special premium above the regular rate,

was available for those who placed grain in the reserve. Farmers' views on the two price loan plan were mixed with nearly an even division between those who agreed and those who disagreed in 7 states. In 3 states, more farmers favored than opposed the idea. However, one-third to one-half of all respondents had no opinion or did not answer the question. This response suggests a lack of information about this idea, a lack of understanding of what the two price loan would mean, or simple a lack of interest in the reserve program.

Are call prices acceptable? Reactions as to whether call prices were about right, considering interests of both producers and consumers, were mixed. The respondents tended to agree more frequently than they disagreed with the current call prices for feed grains and wheat. However, with a "no opinion and "no answer" response ranging from 37 to 60 percent in the participating states, it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions on this question. Since call prices have not been in effect for wheat and were not in effect on corn until most had responded to these surveys, the respondents had little experience or knowledge on which to base an answer.

A single reserve with one release and call price for all? After the suspension of exports to Russia, a separate reserve with a different release and call price was established. When asked if there should be a single release and call price for all producers no matter when they placed their grain in the reserve, respondents had mixed reactions. The most frequent response was no opinion or no answer. However, those who had a definite position more frequently favored the policy of a single release and call price for all producers, no matter when they placed their grain in the reserve. Detailed responses on the grain reserve questions are shown in Table 4.

International Trade Policies

Farmers in all states had strong and definite reactions to questions on international trade policies.

Was the President right? On the question of whether President Carter was right in limiting exports to Russia in January 1980, respondents were divided. In 6 of the 10 states, more farmers disagreed than agreed with the decision. However, in 4 states, opinions were about evenly divided regarding the President's decision.

Use farm exports as a foreign policy instrument? A substantial majority believe that the United States should not limit farm exports for political or foreign policy reasons.

Protect prices if exports limited? In each state, two-thirds or more of the respondents favor a provision in the 1981 farm bill that would provide price protection if exports are limited for any reason.

Renew Russian trade agreement? In each state from 55 to 69 percent favor renewal of the five-year agreement with Russia by which minimum and maximum quantities to be exported are specified. Details are shown in Table 6.

Government Involvement in Pricing and Marketing Exports

Seek international commodity agreements? Farmers in 9 of the 10 states tended to favor the government seeking international agreements with other exporting countries that would control reserves, production, and raise prices.

Establish an export marketing board? The idea of a national board to control marketing of U.S. grain exports received mixed reactions. In 5 states, more farmers opposed this idea than favored it; in 2 states, responses were about equally divided; and in 3 states more farmers favored than opposed the idea. Details are shown in Table 7.

Help for Smaller Farmers

In recent years considerable attention has been given to programs to help smaller and low income farmers. The question was raised as to whether future farm programs should be reoriented to give most price and income support benefits to smaller and medium size farms with gross annual sales under \$40,000. Although farmers have views on both sides of the issue, a majority of the respondents in 9 of the 10 states agreed that smaller farmers should have more benefits. In one state the responses were about evenly split.

Disaster Payments and Crop Insurance

The 1980 Federal Crop Insurance law had been passed just a few weeks before the survey was taken. It was designed to eliminate the disaster provision of the Food and Agriculture Act of 1977 and replace it with a more comprehensive crop insurance plan that would be paid for jointly by the producer and the government. Although opinions were divided and no state had a majority in agreement, more farmers in each state seemed to agree with

replacement of the disaster program with the new all crop insurance plan than disagreed. With the "no opinion" and "no answer" responses ranging 21 to 49 percent, there seems to be a segment of the respondents who could benefit from more information about the program. State by state responses are shown in Table 9.

Food Stamps

Although the food stamp program was designed to increase the food buying power of low income people, it has lost favor with farmers. In 9 states more respondents opposed use of public funds to buy food stamps than favored it. This opposition apparently comes from reports of misuse, rising costs of the program, and the feeling that many able people are getting stamps who should not be.

The question was also raised as to whether the food stamp program and other food assistance programs, which take about 55 percent of the USDA budget, should be transferred to the Department of Health and Human services. In every state a majority of respondents agreed that such a transfer should be made. However, no information was given the respondents about the possible consequences and feasibility of such a transfer that may have influenced their responses. Detailed state by state responses are shown in Table 10.

Soil Conservation

Considerable attention has been centered on growing problems of soil erosion, polluted streams and rivers, and the need to conserve soil. When asked if each farmer should be required to follow recommended soil conservation measures for his farm to qualify for price and income support programs, the responses varied. In 8 states more farmers would favor a mandatory cross-compliance program than oppose it. In 2 states, opinions were about evenly divided. From 13 to 27 percent did not have an opinion or did not respond. Detailed responses are shown in Table 11.

Farmland Ownership

Purchase of farmland by foreign investors has drawn strong criticism. Congress passed a law in 1978 that required foreign owners to register with the Department of Agriculture. When asked if they thought foreigners should not be permitted to buy U.S. farmland, a substantial majority in every state agreed with such a prohibition.

The reactions to prohibiting nonfarmers from buying farmland was more mixed. A majority of Minnesota, Nebraska and North Dakota farmers would favor restricting nonfarmers from buying farmland. Indiana farmers were split about evenly. A majority in the other 6 states would not favor restricting purchases by nonfarmers.

No identification of nonfarmers was made in the question. Recent Congressional hearings and press coverage of investments in farmland by pension trusts might account for part of the opposition to purchases by nonfarmers. State by state responses are shown in Table 12.

Support for Agricultural Research and Extension

Respondents were asked whether they thought government should provide increased funds for agricultural research and extension activities. In each state about two-thirds of those responding agreed that more funds should be provided. State by state responses are shown in Table 13.

Characteristics of Farmers Surveyed

Respondents were asked to give their age, last grade in school completed, major source of farm income, number of acres farmed, and the major organizations they were associated with.

In each state, survey responses came from a range of ages with the majority in the middle years. The educational attainment of respondents showed variation from state to state. The proportion of college graduates was higher in the Northwest than in the midwestern states.

Grain and oilcrops were the major source of income in all states except Oregon. Average farm size was higher in North Dakota and Oregon than in the other states.

Farm Bureau was the most frequently mentioned organization membership in Illinois, Indiana, Texas, Michigan, Ohio, and Nebraska. Farmers Union was more predominant in North Dakota and Minnesota. The largest Grange memberships were reported in Oregon, Washington, and Ohio. Commodity organizations have significant membership in those states where major production takes place. Detailed state figures are shown in Table 14.

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TABLE 1. VIEWS ON FAIR PRICES IN 1981

	Illinois	Indiana	Michi- gan	Minne- sota	Neb- raska	North Dakota	Ohio	Oregon	Washing- ton	Texas
<u>Fair Prices</u>										
Corn (ave. per bu.)	\$ 3.82	\$ 3.77	\$ 3.71	\$ 3.42	\$ 3.69	\$ 3.42	\$ 3.65	\$ 3.61	\$ 3.91	\$ 3.97
Wheat (ave. per bu.)	5.12	5.05	5.00	4.99	5.07	5.32	4.99	5.26	5.32	4.91
Soybeans (ave. per bu.)	9.01	8.32	8.48	8.67	8.68	--	8.54	--	--	8.20
Barley (ave. per bu.)	--	--	--	--	--	3.58	--	3.58	3.67	--
Grain sorghum (per 100 lb.)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	6.12
Sunflower (ave. per bu.)	--	--	--	--	--	13.82	--	--	--	--
Hogs (per 100 lb.)	57.09	56.45	56.77	53.76	57.27	55.50	55.33	--	--	55.99
Choice steers (per 100 lb.)	74.91	75.64	77.24	73.53	77.82	76.50	74.88	78.78	--	--
Choice feeder steers, 400-500 lb. (per 100 lb.)	--	--	--	--	--	96.00	--	89.70* 80.87**	86.98	87.47
Milk, Grade A (per 100 lb.)	13.80	12.97	13.65	13.38	14.28	12.30	13.28	--	--	--
Cotton (per lb.)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	.82

* Calves

** Yearlings

TABLE 2. RECOMMENDED TARGET PRICES AND LOAN RATES FOR 1981

	Illinois	Indiana	Michi- gan	Minne- sota	Neb- raska	North Dakota	Ohio	Oregon	Washing- ton	Texas
<u>Target Prices:</u>										
Corn (per bu.)	\$ 3.06	\$ 3.09	\$ 3.13	\$3.01	\$ 3.09	\$ 3.00	\$ 3.05	\$ 3.06	\$ 3.24	\$ 3.31
Wheat (per bu.)	4.32	4.31	4.42	4.31	4.36	4.63	4.31	4.40	4.55	4.46
Barley (per bu.)	--	--	--	--	--	3.22	--	--	3.26	--
Grain sorghum (per 100 lb.)	--	--	--	--	5.32	--	--	--	--	5.39
Rice (per 100 lb.)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	9.49
Cotton (per lb.)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	.71
<u>Loan Rates:</u>										
Corn (per bu.)	2.85	2.87	2.93	2.81	2.91	2.74	2.82	2.77	2.96	3.07
Wheat (per bu.)	3.84	3.82	3.97	3.89	3.96	4.10	3.81	3.90	3.97	3.99
Soybeans (per bu.)	6.40	6.44	6.47	6.68	6.42	--	6.35	--	--	6.17
Barley (per bu.)	--	--	--	--	--	2.64	--	2.45	2.64	--
Oats (per bu.)	--	--	--	--	--	1.56	--	--	--	--
Sunflower (per bu.)	--	--	--	--	--	10.30	--	--	--	--
Cotton (per lb.)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	.63
Grain sorghum (per 100 lb.)	--	--	--	--	4.78	--	--	--	--	4.64
Rice (per 100 lb.)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	8.70

TABLE 3. PREFERENCES FOR FUTURE LEGISLATION

	Illinois	Indiana	Michi- gan	Minne- sota	Neb- raska	North Dakota	Ohio	Oregon	Washing- ton	Texas
<u>What should Congress do in 1981?</u>										
	<i>(percent)</i>									
Keep present law with minor changes.	37	40	47	52	41	53	43	35	36	46
Eliminate all price and income programs.	31	26	23	21	14	15	26	31	19	21
Develop new legislation.	14	12	11	14	14	16	10	11	12	16
No opinion.	10	13	15	5	15	7	12	12	15	10
No answer.	8	9	4	8	16	9	9	11	18	7

TABLE 4. VIEWS ON FARMER OWNED RESERVE PROGRAM

	Illinois	Indiana	Michi- gan	Minne- sota	Neb- raska	North Dakota	Ohio	Oregon	Washing- ton	Texas
	(percent)									
Reserve has been a good program for farmers:										
Strongly agree	4	4	3	13	11	7	3	5	2	5
Agree	31	36	40	44	37	38	35	29	19	33
No opinion	16	24	20	11	15	16	23	26	22	24
Disagree	30	20	21	19	16	21	24	17	17	18
Strongly disagree	11	6	5	6	4	11	6	6	8	6
No answer	8	10	11	7	17	7	9	17	32	14
Reserve has been a good program for consumers:										
Strongly agree	13	10	12	18	13	17	11	11	9	9
Agree	49	43	44	51	43	43	44	34	26	41
No opinion	18	28	24	13	19	17	25	26	22	24
Disagree	8	8	7	8	5	11	21	7	7	8
Strongly disagree	3	2	3	1	2	4	5	4	4	3
No answer	9	9	10	9	18	8	10	18	32	15
Raise release price for feed grains above 125 percent of loan:										
Strongly agree	7	12	9	15	8	14	9	9	6	12
Agree	38	38	33	34	31	36	37	23	17	37
No opinion	27	28	31	24	23	23	30	36	24	21
Disagree	15	10	11	15	15	12	13	10	6	11
Strongly disagree	2	2	4	2	1	3	1	2	2	3
No answer	11	10	12	10	22	12	10	20	45	16

(continued on following page)

TABLE 4 (continued)

	Illinois	Indiana	Michi- gan	Minne- sota	Neb- raska	North Dakota	Ohio	Oregon	Washing- ton	Texas
	(percent)									
Raise wheat release price above 140 percent of loan:										
Strongly agree	6	9	9	8	7	18	8	9	7	10
Agree	26	32	29	29	19	37	31	23	19	28
No opinion	39	32	33	33	30	18	35	34	24	29
Disagree	12	11	12	14	14	14	13	11	7	12
Strongly disagree	2	2	3	2	1	2	1	3	2	3
No answer	15	14	14	14	29	11	12	20	41	18
Would like two price loan with higher rate for crops in reserve:										
Strongly agree	4	5	5	8	8	9	3	6	3	4
Agree	23	23	24	27	31	27	24	17	11	23
No opinion	29	34	32	25	23	25	35	35	25	29
Disagree	26	21	21	24	13	21	22	15	11	23
Strongly disagree	5	6	6	6	4	9	5	7	5	6
No answer	13	11	12	10	21	9	11	20	45	15
Current call prices for wheat and feed grains about right:										
Strongly agree	1	2	1	4	2	4	1	2	1	2
Agree	30	30	25	32	28	30	30	24	11	28
No opinion	29	35	38	31	25	25	37	37	25	33
Disagree	21	17	18	17	15	22	17	12	9	18
Strongly disagree	4	3	4	4	4	7	2	4	3	3
No answer	15	13	14	12	26	12	13	22	51	16

(Continued on the following page.)

TABLE 4 (continued)

	Illinois	Indiana	Michi- gan	Minne- sota	Neb- raska	North Dakota	Ohio	Oregon	Washing- ton	Texas
	(percent)									
Set single release and call price for all producers, no matter when placed in reserve:										
Strongly agree	5	6	4	8	6	8	5	4	2	8
Agree	34	30	28	29	23	30	33	25	11	28
No opinion	25	31	33	23	29	25	30	33	25	32
Disagree	17	16	18	23	19	20	16	13	10	13
Strongly disagree	3	3	4	5	6	6	2	3	3	3
No answer	16	14	13	12	17	11	14	22	49	16

TABLE 5. VIEWS ON DISCONTINUING TARGET PRICE

	Illinois	Indiana	Michi- gan	Minne- sota	Neb- raska	North Dakota	Ohio	Oregon	Washing- ton	Texas
	<i>(percent)</i>									
Discontinue target price; emphasize reserve program:										
Strongly agree	5	6	6	9	9	7	6	6	3	5
Agree	25	30	27	25	19	16	27	22	10	18
No opinion	24	27	29	23	23	19	29	29	24	30
Disagree	29	21	19	26	21	33	21	20	17	23
Strongly disagree	6	6	5	5	6	15	5	3	9	8
No answer	11	10	14	12	22	10	11	20	37	16

TABLE 6. VIEWS ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE POLICIES

	Illinois	Indiana	Michi- gan	Minne- sota	Neb- raska	North Dakota	Ohio	Oregon	Washing- ton	Texas	
	(percent)										
President was right in limiting exports to Russia in January 1980:											
Strongly agree	10	13	13	14	7	7	15	13	9	16	
Agree	26	33	32	28	20	20	34	29	23	35	
No opinion	4	6	4	4	4	5	5	5	7	5	
Disagree	25	22	27	24	30	27	22	24	24	16	
Strongly disagree	27	17	21	21	22	33	17	19	28	18	
No answer	8	9	3	9	17	8	7	10	9	10	
U.S. should not limit farm exports for political or foreign policy reasons:											
Strongly agree	26	21	21	24	20	31	20	23	27	21	
Agree	37	35	40	35	28	36	34	33	33	33	
No opinion	6	7	6	7	10	9	7	7	10	7	
Disagree	18	22	19	20	19	13	24	20	14	17	
Strongly disagree	6	7	9	5	5	4	8	7	5	11	
No answer	7	8	5	9	18	7	7	10	11	11	
1981 farm bill should provide price protection if exports limited for any reason:											
Strongly agree	32	32	30	40	35	44	33	32	37	35	
Agree	45	47	49	39	40	39	44	40	34	39	
No opinion	5	6	6	5	4	5	6	8	10	6	
Disagree	7	6	7	7	4	3	8	8	4	5	
Strongly disagree	3	2	3	1	1	2	3	3	2	5	
No answer	8	7	5	8	16	7	6	9	13	10	

(Continued on the following page.)

TABLE 6. (continued)

	Illinois	Indiana	Michi- gan	Minne- sota	Neb- raska	North Dakota	Ohio	Oregon	Washing- ton	Texas
	<i>(percent)</i>									
The 5-year export agreement with Russia should be renewed when it expires:										
Strongly agree	15	14	21	21	14	22	18	16	19	19
Agree	44	47	45	48	44	45	46	42	36	40
No opinion	10	14	14	10	13	14	12	12	14	9
Disagree	17	9	10	8	9	7	12	13	9	13
Strongly disagree	6	5	6	3	3	5	6	7	6	10
No answer	8	8	4	10	17	7	6	10	16	9

TABLE 7. VIEWS ON MARKETING AND PRICING

	Illinois	Indiana	Michi- gan	Minne- sota	Neb- raska	North Dakota	Ohio	Oregon	Washing- ton	Texas
	(percent)									
Government should seek agreements with other exporting countries to control production and raise prices:										
Strongly agree	8	11	13	16	12	20	10	12	14	17
Agree	30	36	38	41	39	44	35	39	32	37
No opinion	13	14	13	13	13	13	15	15	13	12
Disagree	27	25	21	17	15	13	26	18	17	20
Strongly disagree	14	7	9	6	5	5	7	7	8	8
No answer	8	7	6	7	16	5	7	9	16	6
Establish a national board to control marketing of U.S. grain exports:										
Strongly agree	7	8	10	11	6	12	7	8	6	19
Agree	23	27	33	31	26	26	27	23	13	36
No opinion	12	19	17	16	20	18	18	18	17	14
Disagree	29	25	22	22	21	22	28	26	20	13
Strongly disagree	23	13	13	13	10	15	14	17	22	11
No answer	6	8	5	7	17	7	6	8	22	7

TABLE 8. HELP FOR SMALLER FARMERS

	Illinois	Indiana	Michi- gan	Minne- sota	Neb- raska	North Dakota	Ohio	Oregon	Washing- ton	Texas
	<i>(percent)</i>									
Give most price and income sup- port benefits to small and medium size farms with gross sales under \$40,000:										
Strongly agree	22	25	27	33	28	39	27	26	18	32
Agree	32	35	29	32	33	33	38	28	20	31
No opinion	10	11	9	8	4	7	8	9	13	8
Disagree	25	18	20	15	16	12	18	18	25	16
Strongly disagree	6	6	11	6	4	5	4	13	9	8
No answer	5	5	4	6	15	4	5	6	15	5

TABLE 9. DISASTER PAYMENTS AND CROP INSURANCE

	Illinois	Indiana	Michi- gan	Minne- sota	Neb- raska	North Dakota	Ohio	Oregon	Washing- ton	Texas
	<i>(percent)</i>									
The disaster program should be replaced by the new all-crop insurance plan:										
Strongly agree	9	10	11	15	8	13	9	7	6	12
Agree	34	31	32	34	26	29	33	36	23	29
No opinion	16	24	18	18	21	22	23	24	20	16
Disagree	26	20	19	19	18	18	23	17	16	23
Strongly disagree	10	8	13	6	10	12	6	8	6	15
No answer	5	7	7	8	17	5	6	8	5	29

TABLE 10. FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

	Illinois	Indiana	Michi- gan	Minne- sota	Neb- raska	North Dakota	Ohio	Oregon	Washing- ton	Texas
	(percent)									
Government should use tax funds to buy food stamps for low income people in the U.S.:										
Strongly agree	6	3	6	8	3	9	4	4	4	7
Agree	23	23	25	26	23	32	29	24	22	23
No opinion	13	16	11	14	17	17	10	13	17	12
Disagree	30	31	26	28	26	24	31	33	20	25
Strongly disagree	21	19	26	17	15	13	20	20	14	26
No answer	7	8	6	7	16	5	6	6	23	7
The food stamp and other USDA food programs should be transferred to HSS:										
Strongly agree	19	18	22	20	16	25	19	15	15	26
Agree	35	32	35	33	27	33	30	35	23	29
No opinion	17	23	15	19	22	20	21	15	19	14
Disagree	13	13	13	14	11	10	15	15	9	12
Strongly disagree	9	7	9	6	7	6	9	14	9	15
No answer	7	7	6	8	17	6	6	6	25	4

TABLE 11. SOIL CONSERVATION

	Illinois	Indiana	Michi- gan	Minne- sota	Neb- raska	North Dakota	Ohio	Oregon	Washing- ton	Texas
	<i>(percent)</i>									
Require each farmer to follow soil conservation measures to qualify for price and income support:										
Strongly agree	14	15	14	16	11	13	15	11	9	11
Agree	38	39	32	32	29	28	39	37	27	30
No opinion	8	11	9	9	9	12	8	8	13	9
Disagree	21	19	28	23	21	25	22	24	20	21
Strongly disagree	14	10	14	13	14	16	10	14	17	25
No answer	5	6	3	7	16	6	6	6	14	4

TABLE 12. FARMLAND OWNERSHIP

	Illinois	Indiana	Michi- gan	Minne- sota	Neb- raska	North Dakota	Ohio	Oregon	Washing- ton	Texas
	(percent)									
Foreigners should not be permitted to buy U.S. farmland:										
Strongly agree	40	44	36	42	43	50	32	31	37	39
Agree	29	29	27	28	28	29	33	27	26	29
No opinion	10	7	12	7	7	7	10	10	8	6
Disagree	15	12	14	8	6	6	16	21	16	14
Strongly disagree	3	3	8	5	3	5	5	7	4	11
No answer	3	5	3	5	13	3	4	4	9	1
Non-farmers should not be permitted to buy U.S. farmland:										
Strongly agree	14	20	15	30	21	32	14	15	15	16
Agree	15	20	22	26	25	26	17	19	14	15
No opinion	13	11	13	10	12	11	12	9	13	10
Disagree	46	32	34	21	24	19	40	36	32	33
Strongly disagree	7	9	13	7	4	7	11	16	10	21
No answer	5	8	3	6	14	5	6	5	16	5

TABLE 13. FUNDS FOR RESEARCH AND EXTENSION

	Illinois	Indiana	Michi- gan	Minne- sota	Neb- raska	North Dakota	Ohio	Oregon	Washing- ton	Texas
	(percent)									
Government should provide increased funds for agricultural research and extension activities:										
Strongly agree	20	18	23	19	10	19	22	24	22	27
Agree	46	41	43	47	47	44	43	44	37	47
No opinion	10	16	12	15	14	16	12	11	13	9
Disagree	15	15	15	11	11	10	13	12	9	8
Strongly disagree	3	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	2	5
No answer	6	6	3	5	15	7	5	5	17	4

TABLE 14. CHARACTERISTICS OF FARMERS SURVEYED

	Illinois	Indiana	Michi- gan	Minne- sota	Neb- raska	North Dakota	Ohio	Oregon	Washing- ton	Texas
Total number of respondents:	411	773	374	382	392	532	718	452	537	305
<u>Age</u>	<i>(percent of respondents)</i>									
Under 30 years	6	4	6	8	7	11	5	2	7	5
30 to 39 years	12	13	16	20	21	19	15	9	19	10
40 to 49 years	24	18	19	20	15	21	20	15.5	21	14
50 to 59 years	30	25	29	28	23	23	26	28	27	32
60 and over	25	38	30	24	23	21	32	44.5	24	39
No answer	2	2	--	--	11	5	1	1	2	0
<u>Education</u>										
Grade school	11	11	16	20	11	23	7	5	5	16
Some high school	11	10	10	10	5	9	10	6	6	14
High school graduate	48	49	38	39	36	28	50	28	27	27
Some college	14	15	23	16	22	20	17	24	33	18
College graduate	13	12	13	9	15	15	14	36	23	23
No answer	3	3	--	6	11	5	2	1	6	2
<u>Major Income Source</u>										
Grain-oilcrops	65	54	44	40	31	58	47	25	60	21
Hogs, beef	10	10	6	10	20	13.5	10	39	} 9	35
Dairy	5	7	17	27	4	2.5	12	6		4
Half grain; half livestock	16	20	14	13	31	16	16	7	9	16
Other	2	6	19	5	2	5	7	23	19	24
No answer	2	3	--	5	12	5	8	--	3	--
<u>Average Number of Acres Farmed</u> (1980)	422	344	350	431	669	1,132	298	1,058	--	541 ^a 730 ^b

(Continued on following page.)

TABLE 14. (continued)

	Illinois	Indiana	Michi- gan	Minne- sota	Neb- raska	North Dakota	Ohio	Oregon	Washing- ton	Texas
	<i>(percent of respondents)</i>									
<u>Farm Organization Membership (1980)</u>										
Farm Bureau	75.2	60.0	67.4	24.3	27.6	28.0	44.2	33.2	17	60.6
Farmers Union	4.1	6.5	2.9	27.5	14.5	62.0	17.3	4.2	5	9.1
Grange	1.0	1.0	1.6	1.3	1.0	--	9.9	16.8	43	--
NFO	1.2	1.4	3.7	6.5	4.8	4.3	2.9	2.9	4	0
AAM	1.0	0.3	3.5	2.1	2.6	2.8	0.7	0.9	3	5.6
Cattlemen	6.8	6.7	6.4	5.2	20.1 ^c	10.1	5.8	34.1	18	17.6
Pork Producers	13.1	14.5	6.4	13.9	12.8	2.6	8.6	--	--	--
Corn Growers	9.0	4.1	3.5	3.1	3.6	--	4.3	--	--	0
Wheat Growers	--	--	--	--	4.6	12.4	--	28.5	43	--
Milk Producers	3.6	4.7	16.8	11.8	2.3	3.0	7.5	--	--	0.7
Sunflower Producers	--	--	--	--	--	9.6	--	--	--	--
Soybean Association	16.8	7.5	9.4	11.3	4.1	--	9.1	--	--	1.3
Sorghum Growers	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	7.9
Labor Union	7.5	8.8	10.2	4.7	0.3	--	11.7	5.5	6	2.3

^a Average acres farmed.

^b Average acres grazed.

^c Nebraska Livestock Feeders and Nebraska Stockgrowers combined.

SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE

Cooperative Extension Service--Illinois Agricultural Experiment Station
University of Illinois, Department of Agricultural Economics

QUESTIONS AND ISSUES ABOUT AGRICULTURE AND FOOD--TELL US HOW YOU FEEL

1. As a farmer, what do you think would be a fair market price in 1981 for the following?

Corn (per bushel) \$ _____ Hogs (per 100 lb.) \$ _____
Wheat (per bushel) \$ _____ Choice steers (per 100 lb.) \$ _____
Soybeans (per bushel) \$ _____ Milk (Grade A, per 100 lb.) \$ _____

2. The 1977 Food and Agriculture Act provided for target prices for feed grains, wheat and cotton. Listed below are the national target prices established for 1980 crops. To the right, put your recommendations for target prices for 1981:

	1980	I recommend for 1981:
Corn	\$2.35	_____
Wheat	\$3.63	_____

3. Listed below are the national average government loan rates for 1980. At the right put your recommendations for loan rates on these crops in 1981:

	1980	I recommend for 1981:
Corn	\$2.25	_____
Wheat	3.00	_____
Soybeans	5.02	_____

4. The Food and Agriculture Act of 1977 is due to expire at the end of 1981. What do you think Congress should do about future farm legislation in 1981? (Check one)

- Keep the present law and make minor changes in loan rates, target prices, and reserves.
 Eliminate all government price and income support programs, including the reserve program.
 Develop totally new farm legislation. Specify: _____
 No opinion.

5. The farmer owned reserve program was a new feature of the Food and Agriculture Act of 1977. Check below to show how you view this program:

- The reserve program has been a good program for farmers since it began in 1978.
- The reserve program has been a good program for consumers since it began in 1978.
- I would favor discontinuing the target price program and placing more emphasis on the reserve program to support farm prices.
- As a producer, I would like to have the release price for feed grains raised above the present 125 percent of loan rate.
- As a producer, I would like to have the release price for wheat raised above the present 140 percent of loan rate.
- I would like to see a two price loan plan--one for crops not placed in the reserve, and a higher rate for crops placed in the reserve.
- Current call prices of 45 percent above the loan for feed grains and 75 percent above the loan for wheat are about right, considering interests of both producers and consumers.
- There should be a single release and call price for all producers, no matter when their grain was placed in the reserve.

	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
--	-------------------	-------	---------------	----------	----------------------

6. Limitations of exports to Russia became a major policy issue during 1980. Check below your views on this issue:

- At the time, I thought the President was right in limiting exports to Russia.
- Based on what has happened, the U.S. should not limit farm exports for political or foreign policy reasons.
- The 1981 farm bill should provide price protection for producers if exports are limited for any reason.
- The 5-year export agreement with Russia which specifies minimum and maximum quantities, should be renewed when the present agreement expires in 1981.

Check below how you feel about each statement:

- Future farm programs should be reoriented to give most price and income support benefits to small and medium size farms with gross annual sales under \$40,000.
- The present disaster program that applies only to feed grains, wheat and cotton should be replaced by the new all-crop insurance plan in which the government pays part of the premium and the producer pays the rest.
- The government should seek agreements with other exporting countries to hold reserves, control production, and raise prices.
- The government should use tax funds to buy food stamps for people in the U.S. with low incomes.
- The food stamp and other food assistance programs for low income people which now take about 55 percent of the USDA budget should be transferred and administered by the Department of Health and Human Services (formerly Health, Education and Welfare).
- To help achieve national and state soil erosion control goals, each farmer should be required to follow recommended soil conservation measures for his farm to qualify for price and income support programs.
- Foreigners should not be permitted to buy U.S. farmland.
- Non-farmers should not be permitted to buy U.S. farmland.
- A national board should be established to control marketing of U.S. grain exports.
- The government should provide increased funds for agricultural research and extension activities.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree

- For research purposes, we would like to know a little about you and your interests.
 - Your age: (Please check)
___ Under 30 ___ 30-39 ___ 40-49 ___ 50-59 ___ 60 or older
 - Number of acres farmed in 1980 ____. Acres of: corn ___ soybeans ___ wheat ___
 - In 1980, what percent of the land that you farmed did you own? ___ percent
 - What will be your most important source of farm income in 1980? (Check one)
___ grain ___ hogs, beef cattle ___ dairy ___ about half grain, half livestock
___ other _____
 - If you or members of your family were employed off your farm in 1980, what percent of your total farm family income in 1980 will come from these nonfarm earnings?
___ less than 25% ___ 25-49% ___ 50-74% ___ 75% or more
 - What was the last year of school you completed?
___ grade school ___ some high school ___ graduated from high school
___ some college ___ graduated from college

g. Please check your association with these organizations:

	Member in 1980	Not a member now but a member at one time
Farm Bureau	_____	_____
Farmers Union	_____	_____
Grange	_____	_____
National Farmers Organization	_____	_____
American Agricultural Movement	_____	_____
Pork Producers	_____	_____
Cattlemen's Association	_____	_____
Milk Producers	_____	_____
Corn Growers	_____	_____
Soybean Association	_____	_____
Labor Union	_____	_____

Thank you for answering these questions. All your individual responses will be kept confidential. You need not sign your name. You are welcome to make any comments on the bottom of this page, or on a separate sheet if you want to write more. Please return in the enclosed self-addressed envelope. It requires no postage.

Comments: _____

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