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FARM VACATIONS in East Central Ohio

Development, Profits, and Problems

**U. S. Department of Agriculture
Resource Development Economics Division
Economic Research Service**

May 1963

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HIGHLIGHTS

Providing nonfarm families with opportunities to vacation on farms can help farmers supplement their incomes. This fact is apparent from an analysis of farms providing vacation facilities in five East Central Ohio counties.

Interviews with farm owners disclosed that: (1) successful farm vacation enterprises have been started with no additional capital investment in the farm and with space available for as few as two guests; (2) farm families enjoy getting to know people who have different backgrounds, ideas, and ways of living; (3) business generally is slow during the first year but increases markedly during the second or third year; and (4) annual net income from these enterprises ranged from \$150 to \$1,500 for families who had provided farm vacation facilities for 2 years or longer.

Questionnaires completed in 1960 by 45 respondents representing 164 persons who vacationed in two of the five counties indicated that most chose a farm vacation for one or more of the following reasons: (1) to experience peace, quiet, and restfulness; (2) to get away from the city and its noise, crowds, rush, and traffic; (3) to enjoy outdoor life, see country scenes, and watch farm life--especially farm animals; and (4) to obtain a new vacation experience.

Interviews with representatives of four local farm vacation associations and the State association disclosed that guests of the Ohio farm families were from cities and towns in many different States. A few were from foreign countries.

More families used these facilities than did individuals traveling alone. Occupations of heads of these families were principally

in professional, sales, office, managerial, skilled, or technical categories.

Both guests and hosts benefited from the farm vacations. City people enjoyed the hospitality, scenery, and opportunities to relax. They also enjoyed good food, good beds, and clean facilities. They wanted additional opportunities to observe a variety of farm chores, to ride horseback, and to swim on the farm or nearby. In addition to increased incomes, farm families enjoyed making new friends and learning about other ways of life.

Farm vacation businesses can be developed rapidly in areas where several farm families provide such facilities. By working together each operator: (1) benefits from the management experiences of others; (2) pays less for advertising, which is done on a group basis; and (3) may send extra guests to neighbors who have space available, receiving, in turn, guests referred by neighbors when they receive more requests for reservations than they can take care of. Also, associations of farm families may obtain the support of neighborhood merchants who benefit both directly and indirectly from an influx of visitors.

To be successful in supplementing income through farm vacations, farm operators might well consider: (1) encouraging such developments by several families in the neighborhood; (2) establishing local and State farm vacation associations, or joining a national group aiding and publicizing farm vacations; (3) making full use of advice and assistance of available public employees; and (4) obtaining available written information about such pertinent things as quantity cooking, work simplification, farm pond construction, and farm beautification.

FARM VACATIONS IN EAST CENTRAL OHIO-- DEVELOPMENT, PROFITS, AND PROBLEMS

by

Jeanne M. Davis

Resource Development Economics Division
Economic Research Service

PURPOSE OF REPORT

Growing Demand for Outdoor Recreation

Demand for outdoor recreation facilities is growing rapidly. Population, leisure time, mobility, and disposable income (spending money) are on the increase. More people are going more places and spending more time and money on recreation than ever before. Types of outdoor summer recreation activities most popular in 1960 were driving for pleasure, swimming, walking for pleasure, playing outdoor games or sports, sightseeing, picnicking, fishing, and boating.¹ "Outdoor recreation activity, already a major part of American life, will triple by the year 2000."²

Farm Facilities for Vacations

Farms can and do provide vacation facilities for some or all of the popular recreation activities. Facilities for each of the 8 most popular activities were found at or near most of the 117 farms providing vacation opportunities, recently analyzed for a report on Private Outdoor Recreation Facilities.³ These 117 farms were located in 22 states, 18 of which are east of the Mississippi River. The study showed swim-

ming facilities were available on or near 62 percent of the 117 farms; fishing at 68 percent; and boating at 34 percent. Also available were sightseeing, or driving for pleasure; walking for pleasure; and picnicking.

Vacation Facilities to Supplement Farm Income

Many farm families are seeking ways to increase their incomes. Some of these families live in areas where they may be able to enlarge or mechanize their farms. Others live in areas of rough terrain where mechanization is difficult, at best. For farm families living in such areas, for elderly or handicapped farm operators, and for others, the need for supplemental income may be acute. Some of these families are too distant from towns or industrial areas to be able to work in stores or factories. Others do not wish off-farm employment but desire to supplement their incomes. Development of vacation facilities may provide increased employment and income opportunities to farm families and additional recreation resources to the public.

THE STUDY AREA

An analysis was made of the development of local farm vacation associations and of experiences of farm owners providing such facilities. These farms are located in East Central Ohio, where the Switzerland of Ohio Farm Vacation Association was formed in 1960 in Monroe and Belmont Counties. This was probably the first local association of

¹Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission, Outdoor Recreation for America, Govt. Print. Off., 1962, p. 4b.

²See p. 47 of report cited in footnote 1.

³Johnson, Hugh A., and Davis, Jeanne M. Private Outdoor Recreation Facilities. ORRRC Study Report 11. Report to the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission by the Economic Research Service, U.S. Dept. Agr. Govt. Printing Office. 154 pp., illus. 1962.

farm families who provide vacation facilities. Similar associations later were formed in Carroll, Guernsey, and Noble Counties. Farm vacation developments in these five counties (fig. 1) are the focal point of the study.

The first interviews on which this study is based were conducted in December 1961 at the time the Ohio Farm Vacation Association was being formed. The majority of the interviews were made in May 1962. More recent information concerning the rapid spread of the farm vacation association idea was obtained by correspondence with the State Association's secretary in January 1963.

Some General Characteristics of Study Area

The five Ohio counties generally have rather rough terrain and are predominantly rural. The 1959 Census of Agriculture reports that more than 55 percent of the land area in each county is in farms. The number of farms and the total acreage in them is decreasing in all five counties (tables 1 and 2). At the same time, the average farm size is increasing in each of these counties, as it is in the entire State (table 3).

The natural resources--iron ore, coal, natural gas, clay, and timber--largely have been depleted, although there still is some production of coal, natural gas, and clay products. Low income, underemployment,

TABLE 1.--Percentage of total land area in farms, Ohio and specified counties

County	1954	1959
	Percent	Percent
Ohio.....	76	71
Belmont.....	65	61
Carroll.....	76	70
Guernsey.....	77	68
Monroe.....	71	56
Noble.....	74	67

Source: Census of Agriculture, Vol. 1, Counties, Part 10, Ohio, County Table 1, 1959.

and unemployment are prevalent in the area. Most industrial plants are concentrated in relatively few places. This makes employment off the farm more difficult if rural people want to retain their farms as residences. Although county residents are attempting to attract new industries, it is unlikely that there will be jobs enough for all who need them.

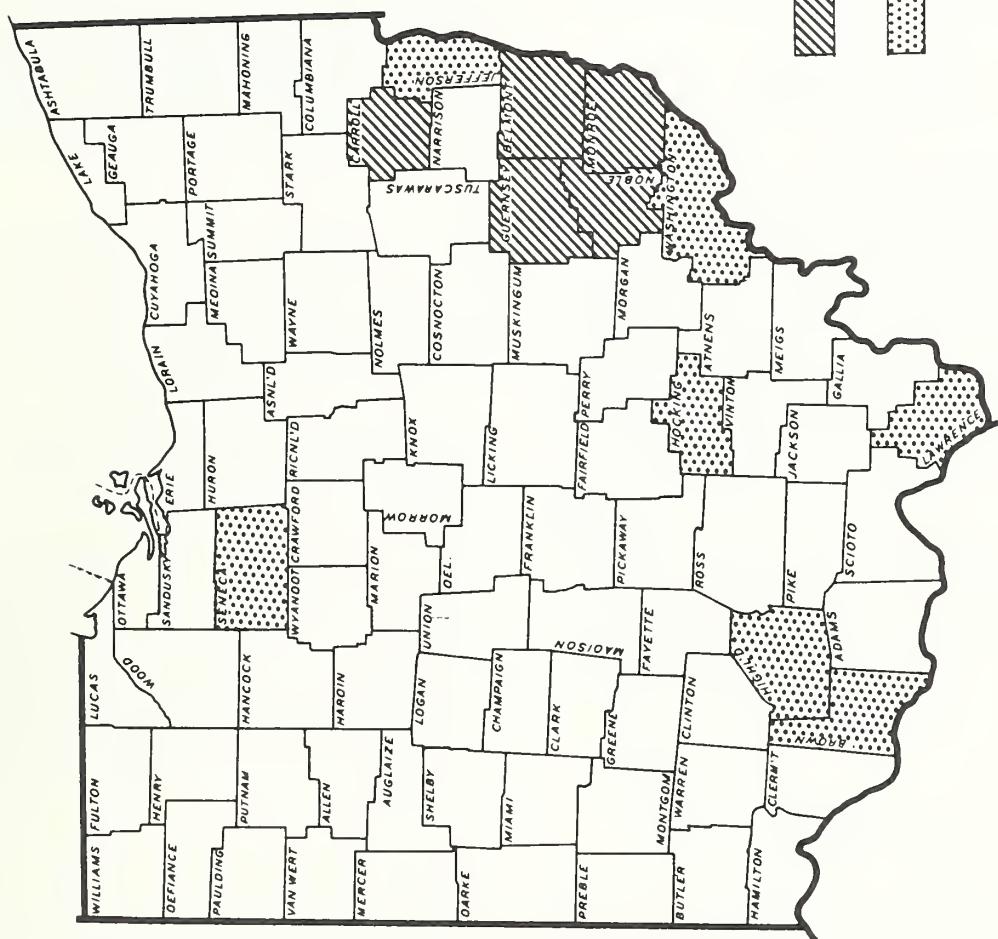
A number of farm people from the study area drive 30 to 40 miles twice a day in order to work in factories in Marietta, Zanesville, Steubenville, or Canton, Ohio, in Wheeling, W. Va., or in Pittsburgh, Pa. Some of the more fortunate job-seekers have found employment in the new industrial plants recently built along the Ohio

TABLE 2.--Decrease in number of farms, Ohio and specified counties

County	Number of farms		Decrease in farms 1954-59	
	1954	1959	Number	Percent
Ohio.....	177,074	140,353	36,721	21
Belmont.....	1,997	1,658	339	17
Carroll.....	1,557	1,343	214	14
Guernsey.....	2,032	1,624	408	20
Monroe.....	1,709	1,255	454	27
Noble.....	1,457	1,177	280	19

Source: Census of Agriculture, Vol. 1, Counties, Part 10, Ohio, County Table 1, 1959.

COUNTIES INCLUDED IN THE OHIO FARM VACATION ASSOCIATION



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NEG. ERS 1856-63 (3) ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE

Figure 1

TABLE 3.--Average size of farms, Ohio and specified counties

County	1954	1959
	Acres	Acres
Ohio.....	113	132
Belmont.....	111	127
Carroll.....	121	129
Guernsey.....	126	139
Monroe.....	121	130
Noble.....	129	146

Source: Census of Agriculture, Vol. 1, Counties, Part 10, Ohio, County Table 1, 1959.

River. However, terrain and other factors limit industrial development there.

FORMATION OF FARM VACATION ASSOCIATIONS

Farm families in Southeastern Ohio have attempted to alleviate some of their problems in a unique way. They have formed associations to help one another establish and advertise a relatively new type of business--that of providing farm vacations to town and city people. Farms providing vacation facilities are found in many States. However, Ohio appears to be the only State where farmers have organized farm vacation associations.

Income and employment problems of the farmers in these five counties are similar in many respects to those of farmers elsewhere. Information about the opportunities and problems of these farm vacation associations and their members should prove useful to farmers in other areas who find it necessary to make more profitable uses of their farm resources.

Switzerland of Ohio Farm Vacation Association

Early in 1959, State and county extension personnel from Ohio attended a national redevelopment conference in West Virginia. At this conference, several possible recreation developments were discussed. Among them was the use of farms to provide vaca-

tion facilities for paying guests. The people from Ohio returned home and talked over the various possibilities with the chairman of their Rural Development Committee.

A farm vacation committee was established in Monroe County. It consisted of two persons from the county seat and three from the rural area. This committee developed a questionnaire and a letter of explanation that were sent to all farm families who were "in a position to go into the farm vacation business." The letter told farm families about the possibility of increasing their incomes by providing farm vacations for city people. It requested that recipients fill in the questionnaire if they were interested in participating in such a program. The questionnaire included requests for information about the number of adults and children who could be accommodated, the months during which guests would be accepted, and the nearby points of tourist interest. Each recipient also was asked to list names of neighbors who might be interested in this opportunity. Notices in the local paper also called area residents' attention to possibilities of the farm vacation business.

The committee discussed with the Judge of the Court of Common Pleas possible types of organizations. The Judge recommended the formation of an association rather than a nonprofit corporation, explaining the good and bad features of each.

Next, the committee selected five temporary trustees, all of whom were leaders in Monroe County. The temporary trustees established a slate of permanent trustees.

Respondents to the questionnaire were invited to a public meeting. Approximately 100 people were present. The County extension agent showed slides he had made of scenic places in the County that would be of interest to visitors. A State extension agent spoke on recreation from the economic viewpoint--the asset the farm vacation business would be to the entire community. Trustees were elected at this meeting.

Later the trustees met, elected officers, firmsed up the list of association members, initiated a brochure for advertising, and planned necessary financing.

When the Switzerland of Ohio Farm Vacation Association was formed, its

membership included 13 farm families in Monroe County and 1 in Belmont County. By the 1962 season, five of the original members in Monroe County were no longer in the farm vacation business, but they had been replaced by five other local families. Between 1959 and 1962 three additional farm families from Belmont County joined the association, bringing that county's membership to 4 and the association's total farm family membership to 17.

GUIDES DEVELOPED FOR THE ASSOCIATION

The brochure for the Switzerland of Ohio Farm Vacation Association was prepared by association members aided by the extension agent. Each member wrote a paragraph describing facilities for vacationists. Restaurant, shop, and service station owners in Monroe County supported the Association by advertising in the brochure. Farm and facility descriptions, other advertisements, and a few paragraphs giving data about the association were published as a booklet. The association also has constructed signs which mark local roads of special scenic interest.

The Switzerland of Ohio Association has been fortunate in receiving voluntary assistance from its members and others interested in improving the economy of the area. For example, a garage mechanic from Monroe County spent more than 100 hours drawing a map of main roads, scenic back roads, and points of historic interest in the County. This tourist map has helped to publicize the area. Printed as a place mat, it is used in Monroe County restaurants. It also is given to farm guests as a guide to interesting scenic and historic places.

At meetings of the association, farm families were given advice to assist them in preparing their farms to receive paying guests. The association drew heavily upon the experiences of the one family that has provided farm vacation facilities for 13 years. Representatives of insurance companies also were invited to the meetings to explain provisions and rates of liability insurance.

Association's 1960 Visitor Survey

To determine the adequacy of existing facilities and develop guidelines for im-

proving them, a survey was made of guests at vacation farms in the Switzerland of Ohio. Survey questionnaires were developed cooperatively by association leaders and the County extension agent. Both simple check-off questions and questions allowing room for detailed comments were used. Questionnaires were mailed at the end of the 1960 season to all families using farm vacation facilities of association members. A letter accompanying the questionnaire explained the reasons for the survey and the desire of association members to upgrade the quality of service provided.

A total of 45 questionnaires were completed and returned. Responses to these questionnaires represented experiences of 164 persons.

Some of the most pertinent comments of respondents were read and discussed at an association meeting. The questionnaires then were made available to the members so that they could review in detail comments on vacation facilities provided.

Names and addresses were not required on the forms, so there was no embarrassment for either the guests or the farm families. Although no one could easily tell which guests had stayed at which farms, a number of the farm families were able to determine which comments were aimed at their particular operations.

An analysis of replies to the Switzerland of Ohio Association questionnaire provides insights that can be of value to farm families considering development of farm vacation facilities.

REASONS FOR VISITING FARMS

Most people who visited the Switzerland of Ohio in 1960 did so for one or more of the following reasons:

- (1) to experience peace, quiet, and restfulness;
- (2) to get away from the city and its noise, crowds, rush, and traffic;
- (3) to enjoy outdoor life, to see country scenes, and to watch farm life--especially farm animals; and
- (4) to obtain a new vacation experience.

Typical of the reasons why families take farm vacations was this comment: "Mainly for a quiet rest away from the city and the

duties and responsibilities of everyday life. Also for a safe place for the children to play." An example of comments given by couples and single people was: "We wanted the peace and quiet of farm living which gave us the opportunity to acquire the rest that we needed. Also . . . to get away from the rush of a tension-filled, work-a-day life."

Many respondents mentioned their children's interest in farm life or a desire to have children enjoy and study farm life. Others indicated that both they and their children enjoyed the farm. Still others said their children wanted a farm vacation because they had always lived in the city.

Surprisingly enough, the low cost of a farm vacation was mentioned by only six respondents--13 percent of those replying. Economy was given as only one of several reasons for choosing this type of vacation.

OCCUPATIONS OF GUESTS

Professional and managerial workers represented 33 percent of the respondents. Included in the professional group were an attorney, two dentists, and several engineers. The managerial level included a bank officer, the manager of an industrial plant, and several brokers.

Salesmen and office workers each accounted for 18 percent of the total. Skilled laborers accounted for 11 percent. This category included machinists and a tool and die maker. The technical services category included 9 percent of the heads of these households; included were a freight claims investigator, a heating inspector, and a barber. The remaining 11 percent of the respondents did not list the occupation of the head of the household.

The majority of these farm visitors were family groups--27 of the 45 responses. Twenty of the 27 were parents vacationing with young children; the other 7 family groups included another relative or two--several of these groups were of three generations. There were 11 married couples, ranging in age from mid-30's to mid-60's. Two women (55 and 65) traveled together. Only 6 of the 45 respondents--4 women in the 55-65 age group and 2 teenage boys--traveled alone.

Of the total of 164 persons in these groups, 56 percent were adults, 34 percent were children who were under 13 years of age in 1960, and 10 percent were between the ages of 13 and 21 in 1960. Among the adults, there were more female than male guests. Among the younger guests, there were a few more boys than girls. Only 7 of the 45 respondents indicated they had taken a farm vacation prior to their 1960 stay in the Switzerland of Ohio.

WHAT PEOPLE LIKED

Another question asked was, "What did you particularly like about your vacation in Monroe County?" Approximately 2 out of 3 respondents especially liked the scenery--the beauty of the countryside. One person wrote that she had "Never realized Ohio was so beautiful."

Most respondents mentioned the hospitality, the warmth, and the friendliness of their hosts. Others commented about the excellence of the food and about the peace and quiet they found on the farm. Still others mentioned the relaxing atmosphere, the pleasure found in being away from crowds, and the cleanliness and neatness of farmhouses where they had stayed. A few were pleasantly surprised to find modern conveniences in the country.

Respondents also enjoyed fishing and swimming, historical sites of interest to adults and children, low cost accommodations, and clean quarters equipped as advertised. They also enjoyed the variety of farm animals and farm chores.

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS

Ten of the 45 respondents had no suggestions to offer--they liked their farm vacations just as they were. Several other respondents commented that the farm vacation places should not be commercialized. They feared that if commercialization and its attendant noise and bustle enter, most of the charm of the area will vanish.

Most respondents gave some suggestions for improvements. Usually comments concerned a need for more recreation facilities--preferably on the farm. Suggested improvements included opportunities to ride horseback; to swim in pools; and to join in planned group activities, such as picnics, bonfires, and square dances. Some parents

suggested planned programs for children, and others wanted to be relieved of the task of making beds.

Some respondents suggested better signs directing guests to individual farms. Others wanted a better list of the restaurants in the area and points of scenic or historic interest. Still others suggested informing children when farm chores will be done, arranging for children to visit neighboring farms where different and interesting tasks are underway, and a chance to help with the gardening.

Perhaps even more important were the implications of the requests for clean living rooms and kitchens, for better beds, for better accommodations, for more space so parents can have some privacy, for more modern bathrooms, and for more accurate descriptions of the accommodations available.

Some of the improvements suggested are expensive. Some also would detract from the farm atmosphere if adopted. However, others that would enhance farm guests' enjoyment could be adopted by farm operators with little or no additional expense.

Spread of Association Idea

Within 2 years after the Switzerland of Ohio Association was organized, similar farm vacation associations were initiated in three nearby counties. A State association also was formed. The county associations in Guernsey, Noble, and Carroll counties have been patterned after the Switzerland of Ohio Association.

Farm families in Guernsey and Noble counties formed farm vacation associations during May 1961. By July 1961, each farm family had written an advertisement for its farm, and a brochure containing these ads had been printed, as had been done previously by the Switzerland of Ohio group. However, these farm families had few guests in 1961 because brochures were distributed late, and cool and rainy weather discouraged vacationers.

The Carroll Vacationland Association was organized in October 1961. Of particular interest in its organization was the valuable guidance received from the county home demonstration agent. The seven fami-

lies participating in the program received assistance about account keeping, home furnishings, meal planning, food buying, and insurance needed.

The Ohio Farm Vacation Association was formed to assist local associations in State and interstate advertising. The Ohio Division of Travel and Recreation prints the State Association's brochure listing farm vacation members and distributes the brochures at travel and sports shows where the State has a booth. It also mails these folders to persons requesting travel information about Ohio.

Among the by-laws and standards of the State Association are the requirements that the water supply, food preparation center, and sanitation facilities at farms providing vacation facilities be approved by the local health department. Also, each person in the household of an Ohio Farm Vacation Association member must pass a tuberculosis X-ray examination.

FARM VACATION FACILITIES

A survey was made of farm vacation facilities provided by the associations for the five East Central Ohio counties. Some survey data were obtained from brochures listing facilities. Other data were obtained from interviews with 21 owners of farm vacation facilities in the five-county area. Also interviewed were county and State farm vacation association representatives and county and State employees.

Space Available

The limiting factor in the number of guests who can be accepted is the sleeping space available. Of particular importance is the method by which space for guests was provided. Nearly all the spaces are in spare rooms or in extra houses owned by the members. There are a few exceptions--additional rooms have been constructed, apartments and houses remodeled, and one new cottage was built.

In 1960 there were 14 farms in the vacation business in Monroe and Belmont Counties. These 14 farms had spaces available for 94 guests. By 1962, 43 farms in five counties were able to accommodate 264 guests comfortably. Thus, in just 2

years a threefold increase occurred in the number of participating farm families; this growth was matched by a nearly threefold increase in the number of guests who can be housed comfortably on these farms.

The four farm vacation associations (for Monroe and Belmont, Guernsey, Noble, and Carroll Counties) in 1962 had available in their members' own homes space for a total of 140 guests.

Apartments or houses other than the farmhouse could accommodate 98 persons comfortably and 26 more in reasonable comfort on rollaway beds, sofabeds, and so forth. In addition, five houses--apparently without bath--were for rent, and camping was permitted at three places.

If the spaces on farms should prove inadequate to meet demand, or if some people prefer other types of accommodations, the association in Carroll County lists a tourist home, and in Monroe County two tourist homes and a hotel are advertised in the Switzerland of Ohio folder.

Charges for Accommodations

Charges for accommodations in 1962 varied widely. Adults who lived in the farmhouse and took all three meals with the farm family--the most usual type of farm vacation accommodation--paid from \$35 to \$60 per week. Thirteen of 25 farm families who listed charges for providing such facilities charged \$35 per week per adult; 7 charged \$40; and \$45, \$50, and \$60 were each charged by 1 family. One farm family served breakfast and lunch, but no dinner. For this, it charged adult guests \$40 per week. Another family charged \$35 and provided only breakfast.

The total range of charges for children who stayed with their parents in the farmhouse was less wide than that for adults, but was more complicated. Charges for children were listed by 22 families. Five charged \$25 per child per week, and another charged \$20. None of these indicated the maximum age limit for charging children's rates. Two families charged \$25 per week for children under the age of 10, five charged \$25 per week for children under

12, and one charged \$25 for each child under 14. Two farm families charged \$28 per week for children under 10. One family charged \$28 for each child under 12. Another charged \$28 for each under 14. All of these were for housing and three meals per day.

Other farm hosts charged rates according to age groups: two charged \$25 for children under 12 and \$28.50 for children 12 and over; 1 charged \$25 for children under 10 and \$30 for those 10 or older. These rates were for children accompanying their parents; rates included three meals each day.

Another family charged \$25 per week for bed, breakfast, and lunch for each child under 14. Of the families listed previously, one family charged \$5 per week for babies--if the parents furnished the baby's food. And another farm family was willing to take in child guests under 14 years of age without their parents. The charge for this was \$35 per week--only \$10 more than their usual charge for child guests.

Charges were less varied where houses, cottages, or apartments were offered for rent and meals were provided. The rates per person for use of a separate house, with meals provided by the farm family, were comparable to the majority of those for rooms in the farmers' homes. Adults were charged \$35 per week at two farms and \$40 per week at two others. All four charged \$25 per week for each child under 12 years of age; one of the four charged \$28.50 for children under 12.

Charges for apartments, cottages, or separate houses rented without meals varied from \$35 (at two farms) to \$75 (at three farms). These charges were for one dwelling unit rented to one family for one week. Each of these houses is furnished and has electricity, a kitchen, and a bath.

Several houses without electricity were available at \$15 and \$20 per house per week. One house with no electricity brought \$10 a week. Unimproved campsites on one farm were \$5 per week per campsite. At another place, improved campsites were \$11 per week for 4 persons, plus 50¢ per night for each additional person.

Recreation Facilities Available on the Farms

Altogether, 72 recreation facilities were mentioned specifically in the State or county brochures' listings. Monroe and Carroll Counties list the greatest variety of recreation facilities available on the farms.

Fishing was available on 17 farms, hunting at 14, and hiking was available at 12. Picnics were provided by eight farm families (probably most would do so, if guests requested them), seven vacation farms offered hayrides, and six provided horses for riding. Four provided swimming; two, boating; and two others, go-cart riding. In addition, many of the farms had play equipment for children.

Points of Interest in These Counties

Some members specify recreation facilities and points of scenic or historic interest near their property. However, these listings are incomplete.

Each farm vacation association's brochure lists the recreation facilities and scenic and historic points of interest in its county. The variety of places listed includes something to interest everyone.

The brochures of all four associations show fishing, boating, and swimming facilities available within their area. Although only three of the four leaflets indicate that both scenic drives and hiking are of interest, both hiking and driving probably would be of interest in each county where these four associations are located. One or more of the associations listed golf courses, horseback riding facilities, hunting, bowling, water-skiing, sailboating, tennis, and folk dancing. Also listed were covered bridges, Indian mounds, a pottery company and its museum, dairies, fruit orchards, fish hatcheries, and a memorial forest.

Among things of interest that are available but generally not reported are: lakes in each county, a ferry across the Ohio River, picturesque paddle-wheel boats on the Ohio, a system of locks to raise and lower boats traveling the Ohio, public game preserves, a narrow-gauge railway,

log buildings, old churches and cemeteries, antique shops, and country stores.

EXPERIENCES OF FARM FAMILIES PROVIDING VACATION FACILITIES

Reasons for Offering Vacation Facilities

Of the farm families interviewed, the majority began accepting vacation guests because the farm income was inadequate. A typical comment was, "We enjoy people and like very much to have guests, but the primary reason we got into the vacation business is because our income needed a boost." Families gave a number of additional reasons why they began this type of enterprise.

Many women said that they always had guests anyway, and thought it a good idea to earn some money instead of spending so much effort, time, and money (for extra food and other supplies) and getting nothing in return.

Others interviewed were in the farm vacation business because they wanted their children to become acquainted with the ideas and interests of people having different ways of life. Others looked forward to broadening their own interests and to making friends with many different types of people.

Still others had extra rooms in their homes because their children had grown and moved away. A few had an extra house on their farms. They saw in the farm vacation business a way of making profitable use of this unneeded space.

One Negro family started a farm vacation business in order to provide members of their race with much-needed inexpensive, wholesome, recreation facilities. The advertisement in their county's farm vacation association brochure welcomes nice people of any race. "We are a Negro family. Negro and White are welcome." Children and pets, too, receive a warm welcome in this home. It is interesting that all but a very few of this family's visitors are white people. Several of their first visitors (from the 1961 season) returned in 1962. In 1962 this family entertained the first foreign guest to take a farm vacation in this rural county.

Advantages of Farm Vacation Enterprises

Farm families were asked what they like about their farm vacation enterprise. Replies varied. Most of these families enjoyed meeting people with different interests. Farm hosts with young children were delighted with the extra, and easy, education their children received in this way. Housewives were pleased with new kitchen or laundry appliances bought with additional income. Others were greatly pleased by seeing tense guests "unwind."

Others told of additional nonmonetary advantages from the enterprise. Frequent references were made to enjoyable experiences in being with the guests and to the educational benefits to the host and his family. Farm families frequently mentioned that guests usually were easy to get along with. They also were neat, helpful, and considerate.

Disadvantages of Farm Vacation Enterprises

The farm vacation business has some drawbacks. It takes time and effort, and it leaves the hosts little privacy or time to themselves.

Thoughtless guests frequently get in the way when chores are being done. And there is always the risk of a guest being injured. One farm family has reduced these problems by posting a list of rules for guests.

A housewife commented that taking in farm vacation guests means a lot of extra work--especially in cooking. Another said that in summertime she seems to be washing dishes all day long. Another woman said that taking care of families vacationing on their farm prevents her from doing other necessary work.

One family rents a nicely furnished house to vacation guests and has had some difficulties. "No matter how nice the people look, they are apt to do some damage--to books, kitchen equipment, and sometimes to furniture."

Investment in Facilities

Successful farm vacation enterprises have been started with no additional capital

investment in the farm and with space available for as few as two guests. However, most farm families have spent some money. Changes made in the farm homes ran the gamut--from purchasing a few new towels and sheets to buying, refinishing, or building a new house. For example, one family bought an adjacent farm. They thought that farm vacations would be a good way to utilize the farm house on it. A new refrigerator was added, but the owners planned to defer other purchases until they had definite reservations for the house.

Many other families made larger additional investments in facilities. One respondent, for example, had two bedrooms completely renovated; he was planning still other repairs. Another respondent installed a new bathroom, replastered ceilings, and rearranged furniture so the house would be more comfortable for guests. Still another family added a wing to their house so they would have an additional bedroom and bath for guests' use in the summer.

One farm family hopes to rent a cottage they own. They worked throughout the summer of 1961 to fix up this cottage because it had not been lived in for 11 years. The family expected to purchase needed additional linens when reservations for the house were received.

Another family completely remodeled their house in 1961. On the first floor the partition between the living room and the dining room was removed to make one large area. A picture window was installed to provide a view of the farm pond. The second floor also was remodeled.

Still another family constructed a 7 1/2-acre fishing lake and a 2-acre swimming lake. The barn now is a bath house and recreation center. There are picnic tables with charcoal grills near them, a play area for small children, and go-carts for teenagers. Campsites were constructed nearby. Motel-type housing is planned.

A remarkable job of preparing for vacationers was done by one family, who, in less than a year, constructed a fishing pond, a large swimming lake, and completely redecorated a house. The swimming and fishing facilities are open to the public for a fee. Swimming is free to their

farm vacation guests. The large old house is high on a hill, overlooking the swimming lake and the fish pond. On the second floor are 4 rooms with a total of 6 double beds. Downstairs are a very large living room, a large dining room, a large kitchen, two new bathrooms, and another large room which may be used as additional living space or as a guest room. All rooms were papered, natural finish woodwork was washed and waxed, and other woodwork was painted. Old bedframes and chests were retained and refinished. Springs, mattresses, and linens are new. Furniture is comfortable and spotlessly clean.

At another farm, the owners built a two-room-and-bath cottage. There are enough bunk beds and bedding to accommodate a family with as many as 10 children.

NET INCOME TO OWNER-OPERATORS

Cash receipts usually increased with increases in numbers of guests. Net income rose as long as additional major improvements or furnishings were not required.

An agricultural technician suggested that a net income of one-half the gross cash receipts is not unreasonable. However, net income to families can vary widely, depending upon the nature of the facility, how labor and management are provided, and whether food is purchased or grown.

For example, some families grow and use their own meat, eggs, and poultry, as well as fruits and vegetables. Therefore, they realize a greater net profit from the vacation enterprise than other families who buy needed foods. Some families have teenage children who help with the cooking, dishwashing, bedmaking, cleaning, and laundry. Still another family has no children and pays a neighbor's daughter to help with the work. Another family hires helpers from a nearby town. Other farmwives do all the work themselves.

Few of the farm families interviewed consider the expense of additional equipment, repairs, or their own labor when determining their net profits from the farm vacation business. Others keep detailed records and know exactly the gross income from the enterprise; expenses for such items as food, linen, repairs, and labor; time spent in farm vacation work; and resulting net profits.

Estimates of net income from the farm vacation enterprises ranged from \$150 to \$1,500 for those families who had been in business 2 years or longer. Although not all persons interviewed provided information, the range probably would include the earnings of the majority of the families providing farm vacation facilities in the five Ohio counties.

Other Income Effects

Interviews with county extension personnel indicate that farm vacations bring new money into these areas. These additional expenditures have had a multiplier effect on local incomes through stimulation of local businesses.

Redecorating, modernizing, or expanding farm homes has provided additional work for carpenters, painters, and plumbers. It has added to the business of local dealers in building materials. New bedding and linens bought for guest use has increased business for other local merchants. Farmers' buying of extra food staples and pasteurized milk has increased the volume of business for local grocers and dairies.

A variety of businesses benefit directly from expenditures by farm vacation guests. Gasoline station operators probably are benefited most, because so many visitors go for sightseeing drives in these scenic areas and need gasoline, oil, and automobile accessories. Drugstores and restaurants also receive a large percentage of the money the vacationists spend.

USE OF FARM VACATION FACILITIES

Data on use of farm vacation facilities were obtained from personal interviews with farm families in the five counties and from a review of letters received by hosts from vacationers.

Types of Visitors

The heads of families using these farm vacation facilities were generally in the professional, managerial, sales, and office work classifications. Few were skilled laborers. There were no semi-skilled or unskilled laborers.



Figure 2.--Small Guests Enjoy Farm Chores. Milking a cow is a new experience for many children who visit farms providing recreation facilities.

Photo by Ohio Department of Industrial and Economic Development

Among the farm vacation guests in these counties were artists; photographers; newspaper reporters; authors of magazine articles and books; doctors of medicine, psychiatry, and dentistry; civil, electrical, and design engineers; preachers; public school teachers; university professors; research scientists; lawyers; bank managers; corporation officials; managers of local offices for national firms; social workers; nurses; stock brokers; salesmen for real estate, drug, and paper companies; skilled laborers--machinists and tool and die makers; accountants; bookkeepers, secretaries, clerks, and other office workers.

Origin of Visitors

Interviews with farm hosts disclosed that most visitors to the farms in these five counties were from cities and suburban areas. A few were from nearby small towns. The majority of the guests were

from Ohio and nearby States--Pennsylvania, New York, West Virginia, Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan. Some guests came from States as far away as Florida and California. There were also a few foreign guests--from Japan, India, and Germany.

Guests' Satisfaction with Farm Vacations

During the interviews, many of the farm families commented on guests' delight in country life. They frequently reported that visitors were very much interested in the beauty of the hill country and in "the simple, ordinary things of everyday life on a farm." Children who visited farms were especially interested in farm animals, the farm work, and daily chores (fig. 2). Parents enjoyed watching their children--accustomed to the restrictions of city and suburban small play areas--run and play on the big lawns



Figure 3.--An Ohio Farm Pond Provides Fun. Wading or swimming in a farm pond is fun for guests of all ages. Fishing, from the bank or from a boat, is another sport guests enjoy.

Photo by U.S. Soil Conservation Service

around farmhouses, romp in the pastures, and wade or swim in farmponds (fig. 3).

Letters guests wrote to their farm hosts express their satisfaction and the high value they place on their farm vacation experience. One guest wrote: "I am ready for this merry-go-round--thanks to the wonderful rest in your home." Another said, "... had we realized how much fun we would have or how many outside interests are available, we would have arranged to stay longer." From another letter, "... we have such pleasant memories of the peace and beauty of your place and . . . the hospitality."

Many guests express their appreciation for their hosts' hospitality. Among typical comments in letters are, "You worked so hard to make our week one to remember; we certainly appreciated it." Another wrote, "Thanks again for everything. We had a very nice time--only it didn't last long enough."

Guests frequently write that they want to return to "their" farm: "I wish that we lived a little closer. I am planning on spending my vacation with you next year. . . ." Another wrote, "We hope to spend another vacation with you sometime. Thanks, once more, for all your

kindness." A child wrote, "Thank you for my best vacation. Hope to see you this winter."

Other guests mentioned they enjoyed a clean place with good facilities, safe drinking water, and good beds.

Of course, letters to hosts are probably more favorable than the opinions of all the guests.

Number of Visitors to Each Farm

The number of paying guests accommodated in one season by farm families ranged widely.

In general, the number of guests was small the first year. Some of those families entering the business had few or none their first year, while others had as many as 15 or 20 guests, some staying for a week or more. A marked increase in numbers of guests frequently occurred the second year. For several farms, their second year was more than double the first. The limited data on number of visitors the third year showed a continued increase.

For example, a family that started its vacation business in 1960 had only two overnight guests that year. In 1961 they had 11 guests--a family of 6 stayed overnight, and another family of 5 stayed for 5 days. During the 1962 vacation season this farm family had a booming business--a total of 63 people, in 12 family groups--visited them. Other hosts were less fortunate.

Although 63 guests during the third year of business is a remarkable achievement, the farm vacation business can grow still larger. During the summer of 1962, their 13th year in business, one family had a total of 101 guests in 28 different family units. Including fall and winter guests, by the end of 1962 this family reported a total of 130 guests.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Most farm families interviewed in the five counties hope to increase their farm vacation business. The few who do not want additional guests are (1) those who already have many guests coming back a second and third time or sending their

friends, or (2) those who prefer to keep their business small so they can better enjoy entertaining their guests.

Value of Advertising

The major way for farm families to increase their number of guests is through advertising. Word-of-mouth advertising--the recommendations of contented guests--is most effective, according to the families interviewed.

However, other forms of advertising are valuable. The second most effective form of advertising appears to be the newspaper and magazine articles about vacations down on the farm. The results of even a very small article are remarkable. On March 7, 1962, the New York Times Travel Section carried a two-inch, single-column article about the Carroll Vacationland Association. Within two weeks' time the Association's secretary had received 1,300 requests for brochures. By June 11, a total of 3,918 county brochures had been mailed out: 1,936 within Ohio, 1,719 to New York, and 263 to 34 other States and the District of Columbia. The exceptionally large mailings to Ohio (49 percent of the total) and New York State (44 percent of the total) were in large measure due to requests by companies and by automobile clubs for a number of the brochures for distribution. The Carroll Vacationland Association's secretary believes that the majority of the requests came as a result of the article in the New York Times.

Other, larger articles about vacations on Ohio farms were printed by local newspapers and by those in large cities in Ohio. Each resulted in requests for information. Many of the farm families interviewed had guests who first learned of Ohio farm vacations through one of these articles.

Improving Facilities

A number of the farm families interviewed reported plans for improving the facilities they offer guests. Plans to paint or paper guestrooms were most frequently mentioned. Other plans include buying washing machines and dishwashers, mattresses and linens. A few families plan to increase the number of available

sleeping spaces by remodeling their own homes or by fixing up an extra apartment or cottage.

New Associations Formed

The number of farm vacation associations is increasing. Farm families in Lawrence County formed an association in 1961 and began accepting guests in 1962. In 1962, farmers in other parts of Ohio formed farm vacation associations in five counties--Hocking, Jefferson, and Seneca Counties each have an association, and farm families in Brown and Highland Counties, together, formed another association.

Each of these associations has joined the State Association. Thus, in 1963 the Ohio Farm Vacation Association includes nine local associations--more than double the number in 1962. A family living in Washington County joined the Switzerland of Ohio Vacation Association in 1963; now 12 counties are included in the nine associations (fig. 1, page 3). The total number of participating members in the State Association increased from 37 in 1962 (its first year) to 65 in 1963.

The secretary of the State Association commented that she believes area agents for resource development are primarily responsible for the growth in the number of farm vacation associations. Within the counties, agricultural extension agents and home demonstration agents also have given a great deal of assistance in the development of this program. The Association also has received help and guidance from the Ohio Department of Industrial and Economic Development, Division of Travel and Recreation.

WHERE TO GET USEFUL INFORMATION

Cooperative extension services at the State land-grant colleges print many educational and informational pamphlets that would be helpful to persons starting a farm vacation business. Such pamphlets include information on nutrition, quantity cooking, and meal service; selection, use, and care of labor-saving equipment; work simplification methods; the buying of supplies; and management of the household. Publications are also available on house

plans, building materials, electrical wiring, plumbing, sewage disposal, and landscaping, in addition to publications on overall planning including the social and economic aspects of private or group recreational developments. Individuals may call upon county extension agents for these publications and other education assistance concerned with the development of a family farm vacation business. The home demonstration agent can supply information related to household management decisions, while the agricultural agent can help farmers decide upon ways to increase the usefulness of their farms for recreation. He can also put them in touch with services available to them from the Soil Conservation Service, Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, Forest Service, Rural Electrification Administration, and other agencies of the Department of Agriculture.

Local county supervisors of the Farmers Home Administration can provide information about recreational enterprises which may be financed on family farms under the provisions of 1961 and 1962 legislation. Recreation facilities included are camping grounds, swimming pools, riding stables, vacation cottages, lakes and ponds for boating and fishing, nature trails, and other facilities. Loans may be made to construct buildings; to buy land, equipment, livestock, and other related recreational items; and also to pay for operating expenses. Under the same legislation loans also may be made to nonprofit associations to finance shifts in land use including development of such recreational areas as ponds, lakes, picnic areas, and parks; sports areas, including athletic fields and facilities, golf courses, target ranges, and ski slopes; camping facilities; forest trails and natural scenic attractions; fishing waters, together with boats, docks, and other related facilities; and hunting areas and preserves.

Local representatives of insurance companies can provide information concerning additional liability insurance many farm families have considered well worth the investment.

County and State health departments can provide advice concerning water supply, food handling, sanitation, and similar requirements which vary from State to State and from county to county.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The following publications of the U.S. Department of Agriculture may be ordered from the Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D.C. The series number of the publication, as well as the title, should be included in the order. Up to 10 different publications will be sent free. Quantity requests should be ordered from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D.C.; the proper amount of payment must be enclosed for such orders. Extension personnel who wish to order these publications should send requests to their State publications distribution officer.

Anderson, Wallace L. Making Land Produce Useful Wildlife. U.S. Dept. Agr., Farmers Bul. 2035. 29 pp., illus. 1961. 15 cents.

Anderson, Wallace L., and Compton, Lawrence V. More Wildlife Through Soil and Water Conservation. U.S. Dept. Agr., Agr. Inform. Bul. 175. 14 pp., illus. 1961. 15 cents.

Borell, Adrey E., and Scheffer, Paul M. Trout in Farm and Ranch Ponds.

U.S. Dept. Agr., Farmers Bul. 2154. 17 pp., illus. 1961. 10 cents.

Botts, Ralph R. Insurance Facts for Farmers. U.S. Dept. Agr., Farmers Bul. 2137. 20 pp., illus. 1961. 10 cents.

Botts, Ralph R. Safeguard Your Farm Against Fire. U.S. Dept. Agr., Farmers Bul. 2150. 12 pp., illus. 1960. 10 cents.

Davison, Verne E. Managing Farm Fish-ponds for Bass and Bluegills. U.S. Dept. Agr., Farmers Bul. 2094. 18 pp., illus. 1955. 15 cents.

U.S. Agricultural Research Service and Rural Electrification Administration. Planning the Electric Water System and Plumbing for Your Farmstead. U.S. Dept. Agr., Miscellaneous Pub. 674. 12 pp., illus. 1961. 15 cents.

U.S. Department of Agriculture. Watch Your Step! Avoid Farm Accidents. Farmers Bul. 2101. 23 pp., illus. 1960. 15 cents.

U.S. Soil Conservation Service. Make Your Farm Pond Safe--Prevent Drownings. U.S. Dept. of Agr., Program Aid 396. 2 pp., illus. 1959. Free.

