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BOOK NOTES

Information, Decision and Action, F. E. Emery and O. A. Oeser. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1958. Pp. ix, 132, 21s. 0d.

Despite some limitations this is a book which should be read by all those associated with, or interested in, agricultural extension activities.

It is subtitled, "A study of the psychological determinants of changes in farming techniques". The problem formulated was: "what are the conditions which determine effective communication between scientists and the farmer; and what are the conditions which determine whether or not a new practice is adopted?"

The problem was restricted by deciding to leave aside all technical aspects of communication theory, of decision making and the theory of games and to leave out the bulk of personality theory and its techniques of measurement.

It is clear that this decision greatly limits the value of the study compared with one's expectation on seeing the title of the book although, with the resources available, these aspects could not have been adequately considered.

The main conclusions presented are derived from a study of 36 East Gippsland graziers drawn at random from a group of 84, stratified by size of flock, i.e., small, less than 1,499 sheep equivalents; medium, 1,500-2,999 sheep equivalents and large with 3,000 or more sheep equivalents. In addition a smaller study of 37 dairy farmers was carried out and the results of the two studies compared.

The authors suggest that on theoretical grounds the degree of urbanisation will have considerable effect on determining the way in which knowledge can be transmitted. It will also affect the likely relationship between the grazier and the extension officer.

It was found that the graziers tend to compartmentalise their knowledge and not see the pattern of interrelation. That is that whilst they were aware of the importance of each of several items they did not appreciate how changes in one would affect the others.

The most interesting chapter is that in which the various relations between scale of business, exposure and adaption are discussed. Various combinations or orders of these things were discovered depending on the particular practices examined.

It was found that adoption of new ideas tended to be a systematic process and that where the farmer could not inter-relate aspects of the problem adoption was slow.

It appears from this work that it is not the increasing of managerial skills but rather the increasing of conceptual skills which should be the extension worker's aim.

To do this requires that use should be made of the leadership patterns which exist in the community. The nature of these will vary from community to community but once discovered they form the most powerful tool the extension worker can use. It will be evident that he will require general knowledge and ability to get on with people rather than very expert knowledge in a narrow field.

All in all this book will provide considerable stimulation and new ideas to those who are associated with extension work.

Statistical Yearbook 1958, Statistical Office of the United Nations, Department of Economics and Social Affairs. New York: 1958. Pp. 612, 71s. 3d. (Aust.).

This, the tenth issue of the *Statistical Yearbook* of the United Nations, is continued in its usual useful form. As is normally the case, some tables which appeared in earlier yearbooks have been dropped from this issue—most of them no doubt temporarily—while a number of new tables have been introduced.

Amongst the new tables included are *world exports by provenance and destination* and *trends in world trade since 1938 compared with trends in population and production*.

A new chapter entitled *Production Summary* has also been introduced with the object of presenting in one table a comparison of the trends in world production of primary products and manufactured goods.

The *Yearbook* is available in two editions—Clothbound (71s. 3d.) and Paperbound (57s. 6d.).

Economic Survey of Europe in 1958, Research and Planning Division, Economic Survey for Europe. Geneva: United Nations, 1959. 22s. 6d. (Aust.).

This is the twelfth in a series of reports prepared by the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Europe.

A major object of the *Survey* is to analyse recent developments in the European economy and elsewhere which may significantly affect the economic framework within which the countries of Europe have to determine their policies.

Recent economic development in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union is described and discussed as is also the Western European economy in 1958. The former includes an interesting review of agricultural developments and policy in the Soviet and other Eastern European countries.

1958 was a year of marked contrast between the East and West in Europe. In most of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union the gross output of industry increased by from 10 to 20 per cent by comparison with the previous year; the increase in agricultural output was also spectacular, particularly in the Soviet where gross output was 11 per cent higher than in 1957.

In contrast in most countries of Western Europe industrial expansion had come to a standstill by the middle of 1958; in a few of them, notably the United Kingdom and Belgium, output had even declined. These developments are discussed and a special section is devoted to the consideration of the possible patterns of renewed expansion in Western Europe.

Longer term issues are considered in the latter part of the *Survey*. Here economic expansion and external balance of Western European countries are discussed and two chapters are devoted to consumption trends in Eastern and Western Europe. These latter chapters are likely to be of particular interest to agricultural economists.