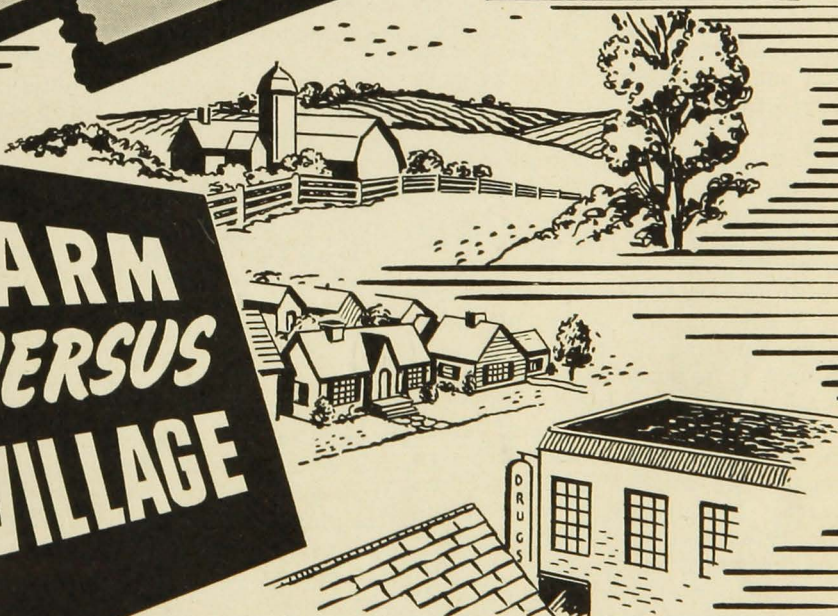


# Satisfactions in Living...

## FARM VERSUS VILLAGE



by

EDGAR C. McVOY

LOWRY NELSON

*Agricultural Experiment Station*  
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

This archival publication may not reflect current scientific knowledge or recommendations.  
Current information available from Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station: <http://www.maes.umn.edu>

# Satisfactions in Living: Farm Versus Village

Edgar C. McVoy<sup>1</sup> and Lowry Nelson

- **H**OW satisfying is rural life? Are farm people generally happy and satisfied, content with their lot? With what aspects of life are they least—or most—satisfied? How do farm and village people compare in degree of satisfaction of their wants? These are some of the questions opened up in this study conducted in 1940.

## TOWN VS. COUNTRY

Throughout the ages, poets, philosophers, and statesmen have contrasted rural and urban life as to their desirability. In the Old Testament, cities were referred to as “dens of iniquity” and the pastoral way of life was identified with virtue and godliness. Greek and Roman poets composed bucolic verses, extolling the joys of life in the country. Rousseau and his school of French philosophers contended that a simple rural life is the most desirable for human beings, because it is more “natural.” In our own country there have been many exponents of the advantages of rural life. Thomas Jefferson envisioned the United States as a nation of small-scale independent farmers. The traditional view of the majority of Americans in the past has been that rural people live a happier life, that they are more moral, industrious, and frugal, braver and more patriotic, more religious and more

stable socially. Moreover, it is usually supposed that they are more secure because they produce a large part of their own sustenance, while their simple, rigorous life within a friendly, closely knit neighborhood is conducive to the greatest measure of satisfaction and happiness.

In recent years this view of rural life has been questioned from several directions. Various writers of fiction, such as Sinclair Lewis and Hamlin Garland, have interpreted rural life in terms of its sordidness, its crudeness, its drudgery, and its hypocrisy. Studies of agricultural and home economists and of rural sociologists have revealed the fact that farm incomes, including the value of products for home consumption, average lower than those of urban people; that, on the whole, farming as an enterprise is very hazardous and offers less security than many other occupations, and that the generalizations about the superior health, social life, and adjustment of farm people need considerable modification.

Few attempts have been made to approach rural people directly and get their own statements concerning their satisfaction with various aspects of living. The study described in this bulletin is such an attempt.

<sup>1</sup> Formerly research assistant, Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station, at present with the Farm Security Administration, Washington, D.C.

Acknowledgments: The authors are indebted to Professor Clifford Kirkpatrick, Professor of Sociology, University of Minnesota, for helpful counsel in planning and carrying through this study. Also to Mrs. Hazel Clampitt for assistance in preparing the manuscript for publication.

## HOW THE STUDY WAS MADE

The method of the study involved first the preparation of a list of items representing various wants or "fields of desire" for an average American family. The questions for each item were designed to indicate how well satisfied the individual was with respect to that item. The items, classified according to major fields such as house and yard, household conveniences, food, clothing, education, health, and security, may be seen in table 9, page 11. Table 1 shows a portion of the report form used for interviewing. Following each item were 9 columns in four of which were recorded responses as to whether the person interviewed had the item in question or had it available; if not, would she like to have it, would she like better quality, would she like greater quantity. The other five columns were used as a five-point scale for rating the present situation with regard to the particular item: excellent, good, fair, poor, or very bad.

In conducting the survey, the interview might begin as follows:

"Have you electricity in your home?"

"No. The line came within two miles of us, but we haven't got it yet." (Interviewer puts symbol "0" in column 1.)

"Would you like to have electricity?"

"Yes, of course." (Interviewer puts check in column 2.)

"How would you rate your present situation with regard to electricity? That is, how do you get along without it?" (He presents the "subject" with a card on which are printed: "excellent," "good," "fair," "poor," and "very bad.")

"Well, I should say we do poorly without it. Our son can't do his lessons right by lamplight, and we'd like to have an electric pump and refrigerator." (Interviewer puts check in column 8, indicating present situation "poor.")

After all the items had been covered in this manner a method of scoring "dissatisfaction" was worked out.

In addition to checking up on their wants as just described, each family was measured on other points by means of four different scales or rating systems which have been carefully prepared and tested on various groups and which are generally accepted among sociologists.<sup>2</sup>

Two of these scales were designed to measure a family's social and economic standing in the community. Another measures an individual's "general adjustment," which might be described as personal morale. The fourth measures the extent of membership and activity in various community organizations. Finally, each person interviewed was given a five-point scale by which to rate herself for happiness, while a general information sheet was filled out for each family giving data about age, education, family composition, health, religious affiliation, nationality, and income. The additional scales and information were included to study how satisfaction of wants might be related to other factors.

Isanti County, Minnesota, was selected as the location for this study. There was no special reason for selecting Isanti County in preference to some other county, except that it was entirely rural (containing no city with 2,500 or more people), and was readily accessible from St. Paul. The primary interest was to develop a method for the study of rural dissatisfaction. Isanti County is definitely not in the

<sup>2</sup> These four scales referred to included: (1) The Chapin Social Status Scale (to village families only); (2) The Oklahoma Farm Family Socio-Economic Status Scale; (3) The Rundquist-Sletto General Adjustment Scale; (4) The Chapin Social Participation Scale. These are all scales carefully prepared and tested on various groups. See Chapin, F. S., *The Measurement of Social Status*, University of Minnesota Press, 1933; and "Social Participation Scale," University of Minnesota Press, 1938; W. H. Sewell, "The Construction and Standardization of a Scale for the Measurement of the Socio-Economic Status of Oklahoma Farm Families," *Okl. Agr. Exp. Sta. Technical Bulletin No. 9*, 1940; E. A. Rundquist and Raymond Sletto, *Personality in the Depression; A Study in the Measurement of Attitudes*, University of Minnesota Press, 1936.

Table 1. Portion of Schedule Used in Survey to Indicate Form  
(Use √ for yes, 0 for no)

|                              | Have<br>1 | Like<br>2 | Quality<br>3 | Quantity<br>4 | Present situation* |        |        |        |         | REMARKS: In what way is situation un-<br>satisfactory |
|------------------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|---------------|--------------------|--------|--------|--------|---------|---|
|                              |           |           |              |               | E<br>5             | G<br>6 | F<br>7 | P<br>8 | VB<br>9 |   |
| Electricity .....            |           |           | xx           |               |                    |        |        |        |         |   |
| Automobile .....             |           |           |              |               |                    |        |        |        |         |   |
| Oranges .....                |           |           |              |               |                    |        |        |        |         |   |
| Washing machine .....        |           |           |              | xx            |                    |        |        |        |         |   |
| Neighborhood .....           | xx        | xx        | xx           | xx            |                    |        |        |        |         |   |
| Old age care prospects ..... | xx        | xx        | xx           | xx            |                    |        |        |        |         |   |
| Hospital .....               |           |           |              | xx            |                    |        |        |        |         |   |
| Room in house .....          | xx        | xx        | xx           |               |                    |        |        |        |         |   |
| Clothing .....               | xx        | xx        |              |               |                    |        |        |        |         |   |
| Meats .....                  | xx        | xx        |              |               |                    |        |        |        |         |   |
| Outdoor sports .....         |           |           | xx           |               |                    |        |        |        |         |   |

\* E=excellent; G=good; F=fair; P=poor; VB=very bad.

better agricultural area of the state, but neither is it in the poorest. While the authors do not consider it typical of the state as a whole, it was regarded as a suitable location for the study, and it has the additional characteristic of falling somewhere close to the median among the counties of the state in agricultural productivity and in average value of farms.

Since it was desired to have a farm and village comparison, Cambridge was selected as the village to be studied. Through a random sampling method, a sample of 60 farm and 52 village families was selected. Then either the wife or the wife and husband of the families selected were interviewed. Most of the comparisons made are between farm and village wives, rather than husbands. But a comparison of husbands and wives in the farm sample indicates that their life satisfactions tend to correspond and that they habitually identify their satisfaction with that of the entire family.

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

In general, the results of this study show that farm women are more dissatisfied than village women in regard to the various items studied, the farm women averaging a dissatisfaction score of 1.9 as compared with 1.3 for the village women. Moreover, the farm women's scores averaged lower than those of the village women on social participation, 7.7 for farm to 16.9 for village, and on socio-economic status, 1.7 for farm to 2.0 for village. In the general adjustment rating where a high score meant a poor adjustment, farm women again came off second best with 91.0 to 72.3 for village women. Only 14 per cent of the farm women rated themselves "very happy" against 47 per cent of village women.

It should be pointed out that the two groups of women differed as to several other factors, all of which will be dis-

**Table 2. Comparison of Farm and Village Women on Various Characteristics**

| Characteristic                                 | Farm                 | Village |
|--|----------------------|---------|
|  | Average scale scores |         |
| Dissatisfaction .....                          | 1.9                  | 1.3     |
| Socio-economic status .....                    | 1.7                  | 2.0     |
| General adjustment .....                       | 91.0                 | 72.3    |
| Social participation .....                     | 7.7                  | 16.9    |
|  | Average              |         |
| Education .....                                | 7.7                  | 9.7     |
| Age .....                                      | 46.3                 | 42.8    |
| Number children at home.....                   | 2.1                  | 1.8     |
|  | Per cent             |         |
| Self-rating on happiness<br>(very happy) ..... | 14.0                 | 47.0    |
| On public aid.....                             | 38.3                 | 11.5    |
| Foreign-born .....                             | 20.0                 | 13.5    |
| Foreign-born parents .....                     | 71.7                 | 46.2    |

cussed in more detail later. In the first place, the farm women averaged about 3½ years older than the village women, 46.3 years to 42.8 years; had less education, rating 7.7 to 9.7; included a higher percentage of foreign-born, 20 per cent against 13.5 for village women; and had a slightly higher average number of children at home, 2.1 compared to 1.8 for village women. How these various factors relate to the degree of dissatisfaction will be indicated in the sections to follow. See table 2.

## DISSATISFACTION AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

The term "socio-economic status" refers to a combined index or measure which includes income, "standing" in the community, material possessions, and related factors. For practical purposes it can be regarded primarily as a rough index of income. Table 3 shows how socio-economic status influences satisfaction in farm and village.

Women in the upper half of the farm group as to socio-economic status rated as follows on satisfaction: excellent 0, good or fair 62 per cent, poor or very

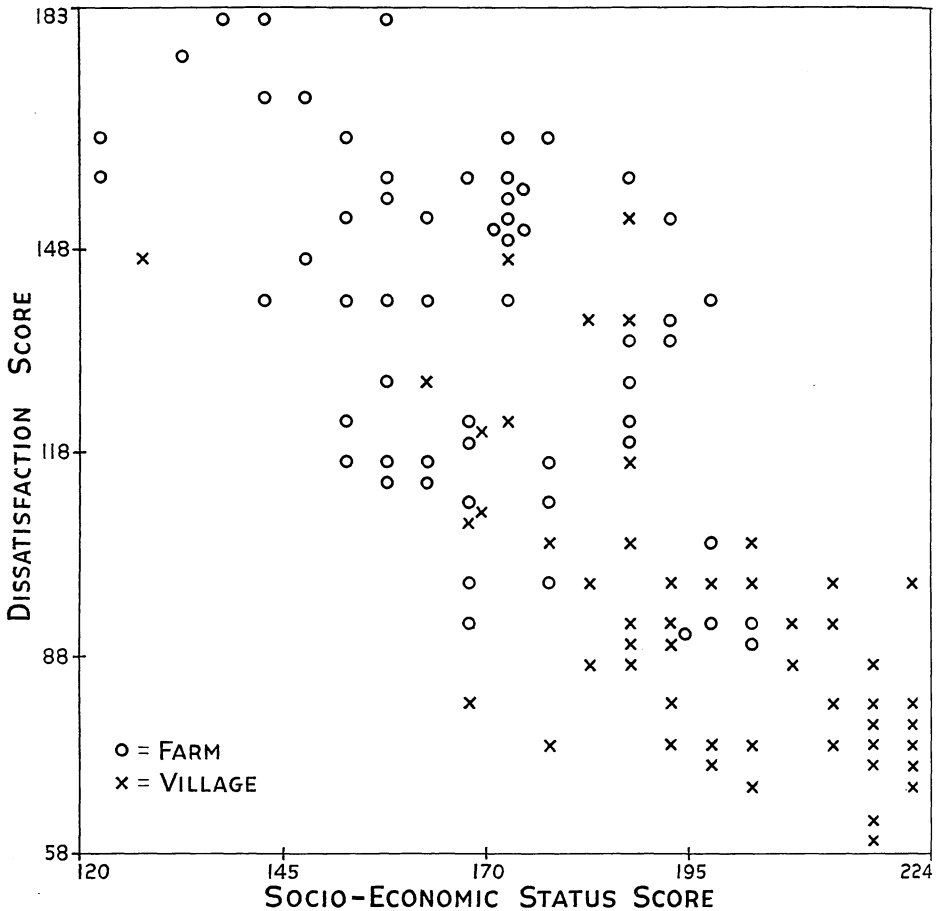


FIG. 1. Scatter diagram showing the relationship between dissatisfaction and socio-economic status scores of farm and village women in Isanti County, Minnesota

Table 3. Percentage of Women in Upper and Lower Socio-Economic Status Reporting Various Degrees of Satisfaction

| Socio-economic status | Satisfaction |              |                   |
|-----------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|
|                       | Excellent    | Good or fair | Poor or very poor |
| Farm                  |              |              |                   |
| Upper half .....      | 0            | 62.0         | 38.0              |
| Lower half .....      | 0            | 55.0         | 45.0              |
| Village               |              |              |                   |
| Upper half .....      | 73.0         | 27.0         | 0                 |
| Lower half .....      | 23.0         | 73.0         | 4.0               |
| All families          |              |              |                   |
| Upper half .....      | 35.0         | 45.0         | 20.0              |
| Lower half .....      | 11.0         | 63.0         | 26.0              |

poor 38 per cent. In the lower half, satisfaction ratings were: excellent 0, good or fair 55 per cent; poor or very poor 45 per cent. For village women, upper half ratings were: excellent 73 per cent, good or fair 27 per cent, poor or very poor 0. The lower half group ratings were: excellent 23 per cent, good or fair 73 per cent, poor or very poor 4 per cent. Generally, those high in socio-economic status were high in satisfaction, and those low in socio-economic status were less satisfied; in other words, the wealthier they

were, the greater was their satisfaction. This relationship between satisfaction and socio-economic status was more consistent for village than for farm women. (See figure 1.)

**SATISFACTION AND SOCIAL PARTICIPATION**

“Social participation” refers to the extent to which a person belongs to organizations in his community and takes part in their activities. A Social Participation Score was obtained by checking membership, attendance, financial contribution, and committees or offices of a person for various organizations. Social participation had less bearing than socio-economic status on the degree of satisfaction, but with high social participation, scores rated higher in satisfaction, though there were many exceptions. For village women it was found, generally, that the greater the participation, the greater the satisfaction, but for farm women, no clear connection between participation and satisfaction was indicated. It appears that the satisfactions of farm women are less dependent upon formal social life than are those of village women. The scale used measured only participation in organized groups and took no account of informal visiting and congenial groupings.

**SATISFACTION AND GENERAL ADJUSTMENT**

The general adjustment scale included a series of statements designed to determine attitudes such as a person’s feeling of adequacy and his outlook toward the future. Results of this study bear out the expectation that general adjustment would be related to satisfaction with one’s way of life. There is a fairly consistent tendency for those with high general adjustment to have high satisfaction, and

**Table 4. Percentage of Farm and Village Women, Best Adjusted and Poorly Adjusted, Who Reported Various Degrees of Satisfaction**

| Social adjustment                     | Satisfaction |              |                   |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|
|                                       | Excellent    | Good or fair | Poor or very poor |
| <b>Farm</b>                           |              |              |                   |
| Best adjusted ..... (24 cases)        | 0            | 75.0         | 25.0              |
| Most poorly adjusted ..... (29 cases) | 0            | 38.0         | 62.0              |
| <b>Village</b>                        |              |              |                   |
| Best adjusted ..... (18 cases)        | 66.3         | 33.3         | 0                 |
| Most poorly adjusted ..... (19 cases) | 37.0         | 58.0         | 5.0               |
| <b>Total</b>                          |              |              |                   |
| Best adjusted ..... (42 cases)        | 29.0         | 57.0         | 14.0              |
| Most poorly adjusted ..... (48 cases) | 14.0         | 46.0         | 40.0              |

for those with low general adjustment to have low satisfaction.

Table 4 shows that of 24 farm women with more favorable general adjustment, only one fourth rated poor or very poor in satisfaction, while of those more poorly adjusted, over three-fifths rated poor to very poor in satisfaction. Similar differences are shown between the better and poorly adjusted village women and degrees of dissatisfaction.

**SATISFACTION AND HAPPINESS**

The word “happiness” has never been defined satisfactorily. However, one would expect satisfaction in the terms of the present study to have some relation to happiness in the popular sense. The women in the sample were asked to rate themselves as “very happy,” “happy,” “neither happy nor unhappy,” “unhappy,” or “very unhappy.” On the whole, farm women rated themselves as less happy than did village women. Happiness self-ratings by the women generally corresponded to satisfaction scores.



## SATISFACTION AND NUMBER OF CHILDREN AT HOME

Children traditionally are supposed to bring great happiness to their parents, but they also represent mouths to feed and sacrifices on the part of parents which may detract from the parents' personal satisfaction. This study showed a tendency for those farm women with larger numbers of children at home to be less satisfied than those with fewer children at home. Among village women, those with more children at home were most satisfied. It is possible that since farm women have lower incomes, their children (most of whom are under 15) would constitute more of a burden on the family resources. There are more children on the average in the farm families (2.1) than in the village families (1.8), but the difference is not great. The number of children ranged up to 12 in farm families and up to 5 in village families.

## SATISFACTION AND EDUCATION

Satisfaction and number of years of schooling are related in some degree for village women, but apparently not at all for farm women. There might be several explanations of this difference; perhaps the educational program is more adapted to helping villagers than to helping farm people in making life adjustments. Rural schools have been widely criticized for failing to relate their teaching to rural life condi-

tions. Undoubtedly, the amount of education is a more important factor in determining social status in the town than in the open country, but since few of the farm women had gone beyond elementary school, the two groups are not strictly comparable. Most of the farm women had about 8 years of schooling compared with 9 years for the village women.

## SATISFACTION SCORES RELATED TO AGE OF HUSBAND

In studying the relation of age to satisfaction, the husband's age was used instead of the wife's, but there was a high degree of correspondence between their ages. The average of farm men was 53.9 and for village men 46.7; for farm women 46.3, and village women 42.8. It was thought that the age of the husband would be more directly associated with the economic status of the family.

There is a slight but not pronounced relationship apparent between age of husband and degree of satisfaction. Out of 17 in the farm group, who rated "good" or better in satisfaction, 10 were over 50 years of age. Of the village group, 44 rated "good" or better on the satisfaction score, and of these only 14 were over 50. It is well known that it takes a longer time for farm people to get sufficiently well established in farming to permit them to satisfy their wants in regard to the items listed on the scale. In becoming owner of a

Table 5. Relation Between Age and Degree of Satisfaction

| Degree of satisfaction | Age groups |         |            |         | Total |         |
|------------------------|------------|---------|------------|---------|-------|---------|
|                        | Under 50   |         | 50 or over |         | Farm  | Village |
|                        | Farm       | Village | Farm       | Village |       |         |
| Total .....            | 27         | 33      | 31         | 20      | 58    | 53      |
| Excellent .....        | .....      | 18      | .....      | 7       | ..... | 25      |
| Good .....             | 7          | 12      | 10         | 7       | 17    | 19      |
| Fair .....             | 8          | 3       | 8          | 5       | 16    | 8       |
| Poor .....             | 9          | .....   | 13         | 1       | 22    | 1       |
| Very poor .....        | 3          | .....   | .....      | .....   | 3     | .....   |



farm, the family usually has to deny itself many items in the standard of living in order to meet payments on land purchase contracts. Such is not the rule with village families. See table 5.

Young and middle-aged people in the village were found to have higher satisfaction than older, but on the farm, the young people have lower satisfaction. In the higher age levels, farm and village satisfaction scores were more alike. Of farm people rating good or excellent on satisfaction, 7 were under 50 years, compared with 10 over 50; but among villagers in these two satisfaction ratings, 30 were under 50 years, compared with 14 over 50.

We can only guess what factors are involved. Perhaps it takes longer to become established in farming than in village pursuits. Or maybe the foreign-born background of a large portion of the farm people, together with rural traditions, gives the old person a more respected place in the family and community than he enjoys in a more urban community.

## SATISFACTION AND NATIONALITY

Some apparently contradictory relations between satisfaction and nationality may be seen in table 6. Whereas on farms the foreign-born women have a higher degree of satisfaction, in the village the native-born are better

**Table 7. Dissatisfaction Scores of Farm and Village Women by Nationality and Nationality of Parents**

| Nationality or nationality of parents | Farm | Village |
|---------------------------------------|------|---------|
|                                       |      |         |
| American-born .....                   | 1.94 | 1.31    |
| Foreign-born .....                    | 1.75 | 1.51    |
| Native parentage .....                | 1.87 | 1.20    |
| Foreign-born parentage .....          | 1.92 | 1.34    |
| Swedish parentage .....               | 1.97 | 1.35    |
| Mixed parentage .....                 | 2.01 | 1.38    |

satisfied. Perhaps this is because on the farm the foreign-born women have been less subjected to the disturbing stimulations of American urban culture and other influences tending to increase the intensity of their wants. Forty-eight native-born farm women had a dissatisfaction score of 1.94, while 12 foreign-born farm women scored 1.75 on dissatisfaction, meaning they were better satisfied than the native-born group. The women were also grouped and compared according to whether their parents were native-born or foreign-born. Here it was found that for both farm and village, those of native-born parentage were better satisfied than those of foreign-born parentage. The dissatisfaction figures here for farm women were 1.87 for 9 of native-born parents and 1.92 for 43 women of foreign-born parentage. For village women the scores were 1.20 for 17 women of native-born parents and 1.34 for 24 women of foreign-born parentage. See table 7.

**Table 6. Dissatisfaction Scores of Farm and Village Women by Nativity of the Women and of Their Parents**

| Nativity groups      | Total  |       | Farm   |       | Village |       |
|----------------------|--------|-------|--------|-------|---------|-------|
|                      | Number | Score | Number | Score | Number  | Score |
| <b>Women:</b>        |        |       |        |       |         |       |
| Native-born .....    | 91     | 1.63  | 48     | 1.94  | 43      | 1.31  |
| Foreign-born .....   | 19     | 1.66  | 12     | 1.75  | 7       | 1.51  |
| Critical ratio ..... |        | 3.02  |        | 1.98  |         | 1.84  |
| <b>Parentage:</b>    |        |       |        |       |         |       |
| Native-born .....    | 26     | 1.44  | 9      | 1.87  | 17      | 1.20  |
| Foreign-born .....   | 67     | 1.71  | 43     | 1.92  | 24      | 1.34  |
| Mixed .....          | 17     | 1.59  | 6      | 2.01  | 11      | 1.38  |

**Table 8. Mean Dissatisfaction and Socio-economic Status Scores for Various Public Assistance Groups in the Farm Sample**

| "Relief" category         | Number cases | Socio-economic status score (mean) | Dissatisfaction score (mean) |
|---------------------------|--------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| All relief classes .....  | 26           | 161                                | 2.06                         |
| FSA borrowers .....       | 7            | 170                                | 1.85                         |
| FSA grants .....          | 7            | 159                                | 2.10                         |
| Direct relief .....       | 12           | 157                                | 2.14                         |
| All others (nonrelief) 34 |              | 174                                | 1.79                         |

C.R. of means of relief and nonrelief groups for socio-economic status is 2.4, for dissatisfaction, 3.0.

## SATISFACTION AND RECEIPT OF PUBLIC AID

Receipt of public aid included direct relief, Old Age Assistance, W.P.A. employment, and Farm Security Administration loans and grants. Generally, those receiving public aid were less satisfied than those not receiving such aid. Table 8 compares 26 farm cases receiving relief in some form with 34 nonrelief cases, finding a dissatisfaction score of 2.06 among the relief cases to 1.79 for the nonrelief group. The relief cases also averaged lower in socio-economic status, 161 to 174. This was true for village samples as well as for farm. Farm Security borrowers had higher status and satisfaction than those receiving Farm Security grants or direct relief.

## DISSATISFACTION SCORES OF FARM AND VILLAGE—OTHER FACTORS CONTROLLED

It has been indicated up to this point that farm women differed considerably from village women in their degrees of satisfaction, with farm women apparently experiencing greater feelings of deprivation. Dissatisfaction scores correlated more or less with variation in such factors as socio-economic status, general adjustment, social participation, age, amount of education, number of children at home, and land of birth.

The question arose therefore as to whether the differences in satisfaction between farm and village women depended to any extent on farm or village residence itself, or were due merely to variations in some of the special factors mentioned. To study this it was necessary to find farm and village cases so nearly alike in respect to the special factors that these differences would be negligible. This was tried on the basis of matching comparable farm cases with village cases. That is, for each group of farm cases of a given age, distribution, education, socio-economic status, and general adjustment scores, there was selected a group of village cases as nearly similar as possible. It was decided to pick only cases with socio-economic status scores from 169 to 208, which had completed 7-9 grades of schooling and with husband's ages from 35 to 59 (numbers inclusive in each case).

By this method it was possible to get only 15 farm and 10 village cases which qualified for the matching, on the basis of socio-economic status, age, and education. In this group of matched cases the mean dissatisfaction scores were 1.84 for farm to 1.40 for village cases.

To get farm and village cases that were alike not only for the factors just mentioned, but also alike in social participation, number of children at home, and general adjustment, individual case-by-case matching was employed. Only 18 farm and village cases could be matched. On this basis the mean dissatisfaction scores were 1.73 for farm to 1.52 for village.

The evidence would seem to indicate, therefore, that differences in degree of satisfaction of the two groups are due to farm or village residence. When cases were matched for the factors of age, socio-economic status, and education, the differences in dissatisfaction scores were rather highly significant; but less so when the cases were matched for the other factors also.

### DISSATISFACTION WITH VARIOUS ASPECTS OF FAMILY LIVING

Having compared individuals and groups according to the sum total of their satisfactions, the authors turned to a comparison of satisfaction or lack of satisfaction with respect to individual items and groups of items in the wants and satisfaction scale. A dissatisfaction rating on each of the 71 items was computed for farm and village women in the following manner: for each rating of excellent, zero points; for each rating of good, 1 point; for each rating of fair, 2 points; for each rating of poor, 3 points; for each rating of very bad, 4 points. Thus a high score for any item meant much dissatisfaction with that item. Since there were 52 village women scoring the items, the average village score for any

item would be its total points divided by 52. To determine the average farm score the divisor 60 was used.

Table 9 shows dissatisfaction ratings for each item in the scale and for groups of related items. Farm women showed more dissatisfaction with almost every item than village women. Of the general categories, farm women were most dissatisfied with clothing, which they gave an average index score of 2.17 meaning fair to poor; automobile, 2.13; security, 2.12; and work conditions, 2.07. Village women showed greatest dissatisfaction with security, 1.71; clothing, 1.63; automobile, 1.60; work conditions, 1.56; recreation, 1.50; and health, 1.50. The items with which farm and village women are most dissatisfied and least dissatisfied are shown in table 10. Six items in the most dissatisfied list are identical for farm and

Table 9. Dissatisfaction Ratings by Farm and Village Women of Various Items

|                                     | Farm Score |        | Village Score |        |
|-------------------------------------|------------|--------|---------------|--------|
|                                     | Gross      | Index* | Gross         | Index* |
| <b>FOOD</b> .....                   | 105        | 1.75   | 62            | 1.19   |
| Food .....                          | 103        | 1.72   | 58            | 1.12   |
| Oranges .....                       | 128        | 2.13   | 66            | 1.27   |
| Meat .....                          | 102        | 1.70   | 73            | 1.40   |
| Fruit .....                         | 125        | 2.08   | 68            | 1.31   |
| Milk and cream .....                | 74         | 1.23   | 59            | 1.13   |
| Fresh vegetables .....              | 101        | 1.68   | 52            | 1.00   |
| <b>CLOTHING</b> .....               | 130        | 2.17   | 85            | 1.63   |
| Clothing .....                      | 133        | 2.22   | 88            | 1.69   |
| Coats .....                         | 127        | 2.12   | 83            | 1.60   |
| <b>EDUCATION</b> .....              | 96         | 1.60   | 71            | 1.37   |
| Education (self) .....              | 121        | 2.02   | 109           | 2.10   |
| Education (children) .....          | 108        | 1.80   | 78            | 1.50   |
| Children's schools .....            | 87         | 1.45   | 27            | 1.38   |
| Magazines .....                     | 88         | 1.47   | 73            | 1.40   |
| Public library books .....          | 88         | 1.47   | 66            | 1.27   |
| Books in home .....                 | 101        | 1.68   | 81            | 1.56   |
| Newspapers .....                    | 81         | 1.35   | 65            | 1.25   |
| <b>HOUSEHOLD CONVENIENCES</b> ..... | 115        | 1.92   | 70            | 1.35   |
| Electricity .....                   | 115        | 1.92   | 61            | 1.17   |
| Washing machine .....               | 108        | 1.80   | 76            | 1.46   |
| Refrigerator .....                  | 135        | 2.25   | 89            | 1.71   |
| Sewage disposal system .....        | 153        | 2.55   | 62            | 1.19   |
| Telephone .....                     | 91         | 1.52   | 69            | 1.33   |
| Running water .....                 | 131        | 2.18   | 60            | 1.15   |
| Vacuum cleaner .....                | 96         | 1.60   | 88            | 1.69   |
| Hired help in home .....            | 84         | 1.40   | 69            | 1.33   |
| Radio .....                         | 123        | 2.05   | 78            | 1.50   |

\* Gross score divided by 60 for farm and by 52 for village.

Table 9 (continued)

|   | Farm Score |        | Village Score |        |
|---|------------|--------|---------------|--------|
|   | Gross      | Index* | Gross         | Index* |
| <b>HOUSE AND YARD</b> .....                             | 114        | 1.90   | 74            | 1.42   |
| House .....   | 117        | 1.95   | 82            | 1.58   |
| Room in house .....                                     | 82         | 1.95   | 64            | 1.23   |
| Lawn .....  | 121        | 2.02   | 82            | 1.60   |
| Central heating plant.....                              | 111        | 1.85   | 83            | 1.60   |
| Roof on house .....                                     | 97         | 1.62   | 67            | 1.29   |
| Kitchen stove .....                                     | 109        | 1.82   | 58            | 1.12   |
| Play space in yard .....                                | 69         | 1.15   | 54            | 1.03   |
| Bathroom(s) .....                                       | 169        | 2.82   | 78            | 1.50   |
| Flower garden .....                                     | 110        | 1.83   | 96            | 1.85   |
| Living room furniture.....                              | 151        | 2.52   | 100           | 1.92   |
| Paint on house .....                                    | 124        | 2.07   | 69            | 1.33   |
| Screens on house .....                                  | 110        | 1.83   | 68            | 1.31   |
| <b>HEALTH</b> .....                                     | 104        | 1.73   | 78            | 1.50   |
| Hospital .....  | 87         | 1.45   | 114           | 2.19   |
| Way of paying health bills.....                         | 106        | 1.77   | 92            | 1.77   |
| Medical care .....                                      | 103        | 1.72   | 77            | 1.48   |
| Dental care .....                                       | 133        | 2.22   | 81            | 1.56   |
| Optical care .....                                      | 128        | 2.13   | 76            | 1.46   |
| Care of mother before and during birth of children..... | 103        | 1.72   | 53            | 1.01   |
| Family physician .....                                  | 70         | 1.17   | 58            | 1.12   |
| <b>RECREATION</b> .....                                 | 106        | 1.77   | 78            | 1.50   |
| Recreation facilities (self).....                       | 91         | 1.52   | 70            | 1.35   |
| Recreation facilities (children).....                   | 119        | 1.98   | 73            | 1.40   |
| Outdoor sports .....                                    | 82         | 1.37   | 70            | 1.35   |
| Movies .....  | 95         | 1.58   | 69            | 1.32   |
| Concerts .....  | 99         | 1.65   | 74            | 1.42   |
| Vacations .....   | 155        | 2.58   | 108           | 2.08   |
| Travel .....  | 148        | 2.47   | 106           | 2.04   |
| Sleep .....   | 82         | 1.37   | 70            | 1.35   |
| Rest .....  | 88         | 1.47   | 72            | 1.38   |
| <b>PARTICIPATION</b> .....                              | 81         | 1.35   | 60            | 1.15   |
| Neighborhood .....                                      | 57         | .95    | 38            | .73    |
| Friends .....   | 64         | 1.07   | 59            | 1.13   |
| Visits to friends.....                                  | 103        | 1.72   | 68            | 1.31   |
| Visits from friends.....                                | 81         | 1.35   | 63            | 1.21   |
| Parties given .....                                     | 94         | 1.57   | 74            | 1.42   |
| Parties attended .....                                  | 95         | 1.58   | 69            | 1.33   |
| Community .....   | 72         | 1.20   | 46            | .88    |
| <b>WORK CONDITIONS</b> .....                            | 124        | 2.07   | 81            | 1.56   |
| Hours of work .....                                     | 145        | 2.42   | 88            | 1.69   |
| Hired help .....  | 90         | 1.50   | 59            | 1.13   |
| Monotony of work.....                                   | 126        | 2.10   | 82            | 1.58   |
| Strenuousness of work.....                              | 138        | 2.30   | 95            | 1.83   |
| <b>AUTOMOBILE</b> .....                                 | 128        | 2.13   | 83            | 1.60   |
| <b>SECURITY</b> .....                                   | 127        | 2.12   | 89            | 1.71   |
| Old age care prospects.....                             | 139        | 2.32   | 95            | 1.83   |
| Life insurance .....                                    | 126        | 2.10   | 87            | 1.67   |
| Auto insurance .....                                    | 108        | 1.80   | 78            | 1.50   |
| Savings .....   | 182        | 3.03   | 128           | 2.46   |
| Children's job prospects.....                           | 126        | 2.10   | 92            | 1.77   |
| Insurance on house.....                                 | 77         | 1.28   | 59            | 1.13   |
| Security of work.....                                   | 133        | 2.22   | 82            | 1.58   |

\* Gross score divided by 60 for farm and by 52 for village.

Table 10. Items with Which Farm and Village Women Are Most and Least Dissatisfied

| Farm                      | Village   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Most dissatisfied</b>  |   |
| Savings                   | Savings   |
| Bathroom                  | Hospital  |
| Vacations                 | Education (self)                                      |
| Sewage disposal system    | Vacations   |
| Living room furniture     | Travel  |
| Travel                    | Living room furniture                                 |
| Hours of work             | Flower garden   |
| Old age care prospects    | Old age care prospects                                |
| Strenuousness of work     | Strenuousness of work                                 |
| Refrigerator              | Children's job prospects                              |
| <b>Least dissatisfied</b> |   |
| Neighborhood              | Children's schools                                    |
| Friends                   | Neighborhood  |
| Play space in yard        | Community   |
| Family physician          | Fresh vegetables                                      |
| Community                 | Care of mother before and during<br>birth of children |
| Milk and cream            | Play space in yard                                    |
| Insurance on house        | Family physician                                      |
| Visits from friends       | Food  |
| Newspapers                | Milk and cream  |
| Room in house             | Kitchen stove   |
| Outdoor sports            | Friends   |
| Sleep                     | Hired help  |
|                           | Insurance on house                                    |

Table 11. Items to Which Greatest and Least Importance Are Attached by Village and Farm Women

| Farm  | Village   |
|---|---|
| <b>Greatest importance</b>                            |   |
| Milk and cream  | Food  |
| Kitchen stove   | Education (Children)                                  |
| Savings   | Sleep   |
| Care of mother before and during<br>birth of children | Rest  |
| Screens on home                                       | Kitchen   |
| Sleep   | Milk and cream  |
| Dental care   | Care of mother before and during<br>birth of children |
| Food  | Medical care  |
| Roof on house   | Children's schools                                    |
|   | Roof on house   |
| <b>Least importance</b>                               |   |
| Movies  | Hired help outside home                               |
| Parties given   | Movies  |
| Parties attended                                      | Hired help in home                                    |
| Concerts  | Parties given   |
| Travel  | Parties attended                                      |
| Vacuum cleaner  | Monotony of work                                      |
| Monotony of work                                      | Concerts  |
| Outdoor sports  | Travel  |
| Magazines   | Central heating plant                                 |
| Central heating plant                                 | Recreation facilities (self)                          |

village—savings, vacations, living room furniture, travel, old age care prospects, and strenuousness of work. The least dissatisfied list of both farm and village included neighborhood, friends, play space in yard, family physician, community, milk and cream, and insurance on house. In items on which they differed, the farm women were most dissatisfied with conveniences such as bathroom, average index score 2.82, very close to poor; sewage disposal system, 2.55; and refrigerator, 2.25; and the village women were most dissatisfied with hospital, 2.19; their own education, 2.10; flower garden, 1.85; and children's job prospects, 1.77.

Farm and village women were also asked to rate the importance of the items on the scale in the following terms: absolutely essential, very important, fairly important, unimportant, and entirely useless. Table 11 shows items regarded as most important and least important by farm and village

women. These items are almost identical for the two groups. Of the major categories given, only automobiles, clothing, and work conditions received higher ratings by farm than by village women. The two groups agreed in giving greatest weight to general categories of food, health, clothing, and security; least to work conditions, recreation, and participation. Certain items dealing with religion were deleted from the scale because replies could not be weighted satisfactorily. However, both groups considered religious activities important.

### PROPOSED USE OF CASH GIFT

The question was asked of each person interviewed: "If you were given \$1,000 in cash, how would you spend it?" Some women mentioned only one way of spending the whole amount; others indicated several. Table 12 gives the items and the times mentioned.

Table 12. Proposed Expenditure of \$1,000 Cash Gift by Farm and Village Women

| Item   | Times mentioned |               |
|--|-----------------|---------------|
|  | Farm women      | Village women |
| A home of one's own.....   | 19              | 11            |
| Payment of debts, bills, loans.....  | 16              | 11            |
| Clothing.....  | 16              | 5             |
| Home improvements (water works, bathroom, etc.).....                       | 14              | 15            |
| House furnishings (radio, stove, living room suite, mattresses, etc.)..... | 13              | 13            |
| Savings (for old age, rainy day, etc.).....                                | 9               | 8             |
| Food.....  | 7               | .....         |
| Automobile.....  | 7               | 3             |
| Farm improvements (buildings, livestock, machinery).....                   | 7               | .....         |
| Living expenses.....   | 6               | 2             |
| Church (new building, general expenditures).....                           | 2               | .....         |
| Helping the poor or needy people.....                                      | 2               | 2             |
| Health (operation for self, daughter's health).....                        | 2               | .....         |
| Travel.....  | 2               | 11            |
| A new house (on same property).....  | 1               | .....         |
| Payment of taxes.....  | 1               | .....         |
| Additional land.....   | 1               | .....         |
| Hired help on farm.....  | 1               | .....         |
| Lake shore cottage.....  | 1               | .....         |
| Children's education, "culture" or future.....                             | .....           | 8             |
| Vacation.....  | .....           | 1             |
| Going to city to get new job.....  | .....           | 1             |
| Invest in real estate.....   | .....           | 1             |
| Red Cross.....   | .....           | 1             |
| Nothing (has everything she wants).....                                    | .....           | 1             |

Table 13. Percentages of Farm and Village Women Preferring Farm, Village, or City, for Themselves and for Their Children

| Preference          | Farm women |          | Village women |          |
|---------------------|------------|----------|---------------|----------|
|                     | Self       | Children | Self          | Children |
| Farm .....          | 60.0       | 35.0     | 2.0           | 0.0      |
| Village .....       | 23.0       | 7.0      | 88.0          | 58.0     |
| City .....          | 12.0       | 8.0      | 8.0           | 2.0      |
| No preference ..... | 5.0        | 50.0     | 2.0           | 41.0     |

Items which received relatively more mention by farm than by village women included clothing, food, living expenses, and automobile. Those items for which the village women voted more heavily than farm women were travel and children's education.

### PREFERENCE FOR CITY OR COUNTRY

The women were asked to indicate their preference for farm, village, or city as a place to live, both for themselves and for their children (table 13).

It is interesting to note that only 60 per cent of the farm women prefer their present situation to the village or city, although 88 per cent of the village women prefer the village to farm or city. Only 35 per cent of the farm women expressed a preference for the farm as a place of residence for their children, although 58 per cent of village women would prefer to have their children live in the village. However, in both groups upwards of half the parents apparently want to let the children themselves settle that question. These expressions of preference for a place to live tend to confirm the validity of the dissatisfaction scale, which indicates a relatively higher dissatisfaction of farm women with their living conditions.

### GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

1. The nature and extent of wants and the degree of their satisfaction differed with variations in age, occupation, place of living, nationality, edu-

cation, socio-economic status, social participation, and family composition.

2. Degree of satisfaction tended to increase with income and socio-economic status. There was a marked relationship between these two factors, less so at the extremes, stronger for village than for farm women.

3. Degree of satisfaction increased somewhat with amount of social participation for the village women, but was negligible for farm women.

4. Degree of satisfaction increased with degree of general adjustment. Association between these two factors was moderately high, but somewhat lower for farm than for village women.

5. Satisfaction increased with amount of happiness according to a self-rating.

6. Satisfaction was not clearly related to number of children at home.

7. Degree of satisfaction increased slightly with amount of education for village women, but not appreciably for farm women.

8. Degree of satisfaction was not clearly related to age.

9. Satisfaction was related to nationality and to nationality of parents. Foreign-born women on farms had a higher degree of satisfaction than the native-born, but the native-born were better satisfied in the village. For both farm and village, those of native-born parentage were better satisfied than those of foreign-born parentage.

10. Satisfaction was related to receipt of relief and other public aid. Those receiving aid showed a significantly lower degree of satisfaction than those not receiving aid.



11. As compared with farm women, village women had a higher socio-economic status, higher degree of satisfaction and of general adjustment, a higher self-rating of happiness, higher amount of social participation, more years of education, fewer children; they averaged several years younger; they contained fewer foreign-born and persons of foreign-born parentage; fewer received public relief or aid.

12. When matched for socio-economic status, participation, number of children at home, school grade completed, and age, farm and village women still differed significantly in satisfaction and general adjustment and happiness.

13. In the disposal of a proposed cash gift of \$1,000, both farm and village women would have used it most often for some purpose related to the home. Farm women, more frequently than village, would have spent the money for food, clothing, living expenses, and automobile, while village women would more often have spent it for travel, children's education, and items less closely related to the physical necessities of living.

14. In choice of a place of residence, 60 per cent of the farm women preferred farm, whereas 88 per cent of the village women preferred village.

15. In comparing general categories of items in family living, it was found that farm women showed least satisfaction with clothing, automobile, security, and work conditions. Village women showed least with clothing, automobile, work conditions, recreation, and health.

16. Farm women tended to rate all items less important than did village women. Of the major categories given, only automobile, clothing, and work conditions were rated more important by farm women. Both groups agreed in rating highest: food, health, clothing, and security; lowest: work conditions, recreation, and participation.

## APPENDIX

### Coefficients of Correlation of Various Factors for Farm, Village, and Combined Groups

| Factors Correlated* | Number of cases | r    | S.E. |
|---------------------|-----------------|------|------|
| 1 and 2.....        | 112             | -.73 | .04  |
| Farm .....          | 60              | -.52 | .10  |
| Village .....       | 52              | -.65 | .08  |
| (eta)† .....        | 112             | -.82 | .03  |
| 1 and 4.....        | 89              | .63  | .06  |
| Farm .....          | 52              | .30  | .13  |
| Village .....       | 37              | .39  | .14  |
| 1 and 5.....        | 112             | -.41 | .08  |
| Farm .....          | 60              | -.11 | .13  |
| Village .....       | 52              | -.40 | .12  |
| 1 and 7.....        | 112             | .21  | .09  |
| Farm .....          | 60              | .47  | .10  |
| Village .....       | 52              | -.20 | .13  |
| 1 and 8.....        | 112             | .17  | .09  |
| Farm .....          | 60              | -.20 | .12  |
| Village .....       | 52              | .34  | .12  |
| 1 and 9.....        | 112             | -.34 | .08  |
| Farm .....          | 60              | -.06 | .13  |
| Village .....       | 52              | -.33 | .12  |
| 2 and 5.....        | 112             | .66  | .09  |
| Farm .....          | 60              | .57  | .08  |
| Village .....       | 52              | .66  | .05  |
| 2 and 3.....        | 52              | .84  | .04  |
| 3 and 6.....        | 52              | .76  | .06  |

#### \* Description of factors:

1. Dissatisfaction. The higher the score, the greater the dissatisfaction.
2. Socio-Economic Status. The higher the score, the higher the status.
3. Social Status. The higher the score, the higher the status. Obtained for village families only.
4. General Adjustment. The higher the score, the lower the adjustment.
5. Participation. The higher the score, the greater the participation.
6. Income. Obtained for village families only.
7. Number of children at home.
8. Age of husband. Highly correlated with age of wife.
9. Wife's years of education.

† Since the distribution appeared to be somewhat curvilinear, an eta coefficient was computed. The difference between the eta and r indicates a tendency for the two variables to be less associated at the extremes.

Note: For the more technical aspects of the study, see McVoy, E. C., "A Method for Measuring the Satisfaction of Wants" *Sociometry*, February, 1942, pp. 80-88; also McVoy, "Study of Wants and Their Satisfaction Among a Sample of Rural People in Minnesota" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Minnesota, 1941. Manuscript).