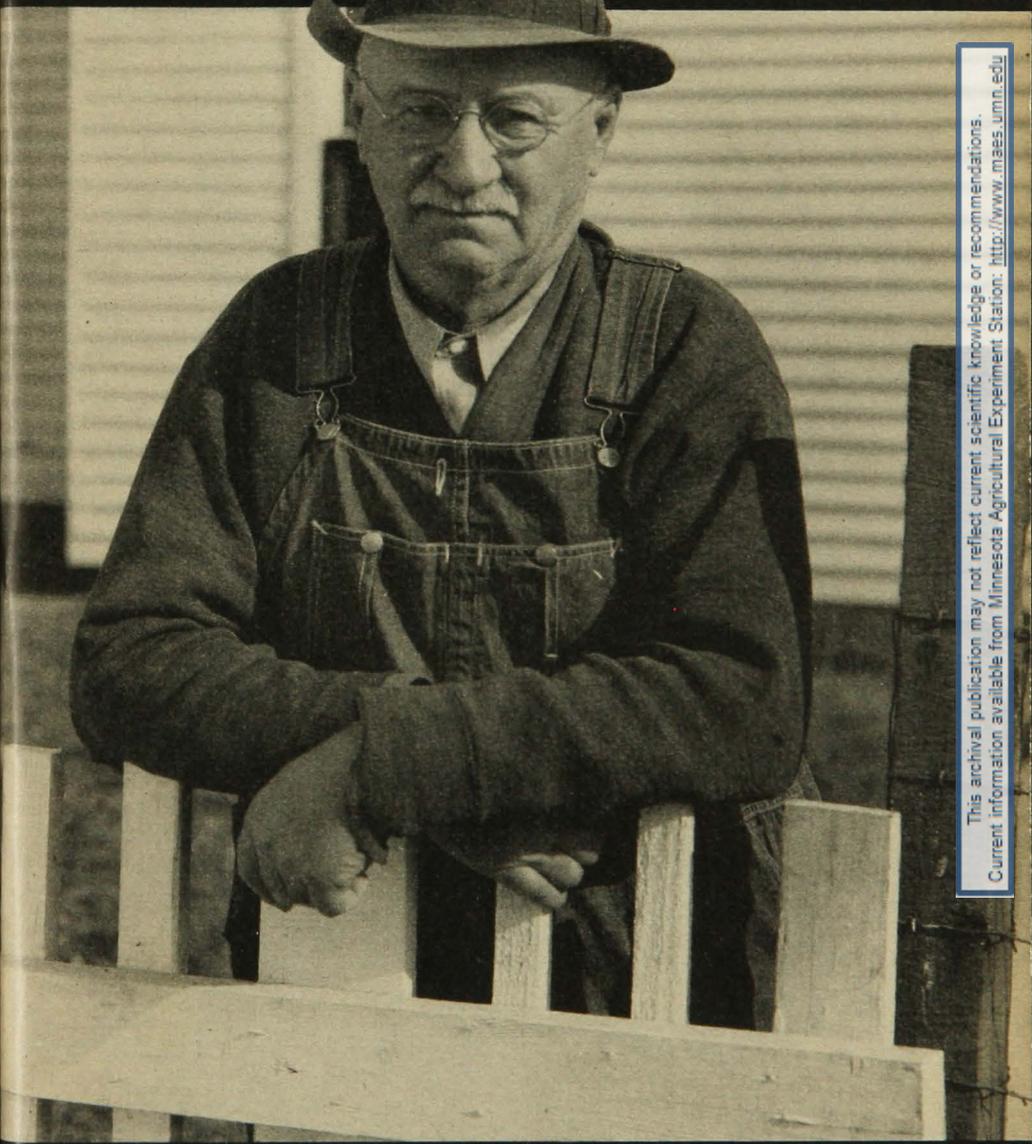


Farm Retirement

IN MINNESOTA

LOWRY NELSON



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TWO GROUPS in American Rural Society have been much discussed in recent years, namely, the old and the young. During the depression years of the 1930's the young people on farms were a particular concern since their usual opportunities for migration to nonfarm jobs were temporarily cut off. At the same time, the old people, their services in little demand, were dependent on children whose resources were depleted by depression and drouth, or they were compelled to continue active work long after the normal time of retirement. Out of the stress and anxiety of their need they organized themselves for the purpose of exerting pressure on state and national governments for pensions or old age assistance. The war temporarily solved the problem for both of these groups, but in all likelihood the years ahead will bring them and their problems back into public notice.

Because of the prevailing low income in agriculture over past years, farmers have found it difficult to reach a financial position for retirement before rather advanced ages. Thus the young man, who is ready to begin a career as a farm operator, is unable to secure a farm. In other words, a postponed retirement of farm operators lessens the opportunities for young men to enter agriculture. Therefore, the problem of retirement of operators is closely linked with the welfare of rural youth.

A good deal of interest centers about farm retirement at the present time because of the recommendation now before Congress that farm operators, as well as other self-employed persons, be brought under the provision of the Social Security Act with reference to Old Age and Survivors Insurance. Presumably, more farmers would retire at age 65 than now do if they had some assurance that they would not need to submit to a means test to get old age assistance or if they had other and adequate ways of financing their own retirement.

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FARM RETIREMENT IN MINNESOTA

Purpose of This Study

A project was organized in the summer of 1944 to secure information on farm retirement from two groups of farmers, active and retired, 55 years or older. Originally it was planned to secure schedules of the active farmers from one or two selected townships from each of the nine type-of-farming areas in Minnesota and of the retired farmers living in villages or in nearby areas located in the same townships. It was found impractical, however, to secure the schedules from one of these areas. The final sample, therefore, represents only eight of the nine areas. Wartime restrictions made it impossible to secure as complete a sample of the retired farmers as was originally planned.

It was the object of this survey to secure more precise data with regard to what age and for what reasons Min-

nesota farmers ordinarily retire; what sort of work, if any, they engage in after retirement; what living arrangements prevail for most of them; what disposition is made of their farms; how they finance their retirement; and other points of social interest.

Characteristics of the Sample

There were 360 farmers in the survey, 249 active, 111 retired. Their distribution by counties and townships or villages is shown in table 1 and figure 1.

Age and Marital Status. While the majority of the active farmers were under 65 years, it is important to observe that 40, or 16.1 per cent, were between 65 and 69, while 38, or 15.2 per cent, were 70 or older. Among the retired farmers there were 34 who were under 65 but who considered themselves in the retired status (see figure 2).

Table 1. All Respondents by County and Township or Village, Active and Retired

County	Township or village	Total respondents	Active respondents	Retired respondents
Carlton	Silverbrook	17	13	4
	Wrenshall	15	12	3
Clay	Moland	15	14	1
	Elmwood	11	11	0
	Glyndon	12	11	1
	Kurtz	11	11	0
Hennepin	Maple Grove	5	2	3
	Dayton	6	2	4
	Hassen	26	18	8
	Minnestrista	26	21	5
Mille Lacs	Green Bush	45	32	13
Nobles	Elk	10	8	2
	De Wald	14	13	1
	Brewster Village	7	0	7
	Reading Village	5	0	5
Renville	Olivia Village	22	0	22
	Henryville	19	14	5
	Brandon	31	20	11
Steele	Blooming Prairie	9	1	8
	Summit	41	38	3
Winona	Utica	13	8	5
	Total	360	249	111

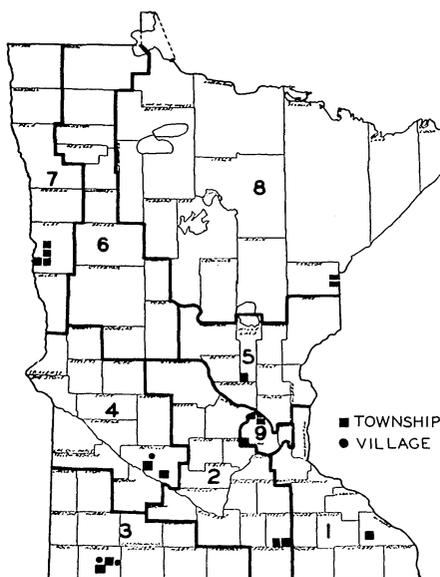


Fig. 1. Type-of-farming areas in Minnesota and areas surveyed

- Area 1. Southeast: dairy and livestock.
 Area 2. South-central: dairy and livestock.
 Area 3. Southwest: livestock and cash grain.
 Area 4. West-central: livestock, cash grain.
 Area 5. East-central: dairy and potatoes.
 Area 6. Northwestern: dairy and livestock.
 Area 7. Red River Valley: small grain, potatoes, and livestock.
 Area 8. Northern cutover: dairy, potatoes, and clover seed.
 Area 9. Twin City suburban: truck, dairy, fruit.

Of the 249 active farmers, 214 were married, 15 single, 18 widowed, and 2 divorced. Of the 111 retired farmers, 82 were married, 3 single, 24 widowed, and 2 divorced.

Nationality and Place of Birth. Figure 3 shows that persons of German descent predominate in both the active and the retired groups with those of Scandinavian descent in second place and British third.¹

A considerable proportion, 26.9 per cent, of the total respondents are foreign-born. More than half, 56.7 per cent, of those that are foreign-born are active farmers and in the younger age groups, as seen in table 2, while the proportion of retired farmers who are foreign-born becomes higher as age advances. Table 3 reveals that those of foreign birth entered the country predominately at two age levels, either as children under 5 or as youths between 16 and 25.

Tenure Status. The sample of active farmers consists of 174 owners, 40 part-owners, and 35 tenants, constituting 70.0, 16.0, and 14.0 per cent, respectively, of the total. It appears, therefore, that tenants are underrepresented, since the average percentage of tenancy for the state in 1940 was 32.3. The percentage of the retired farmers who were tenants at the time of retirement was less than 10. The reason for the apparent underrepresentation of tenants in the active sample is that the survey was limited to farmers who were at least 55. Tenants are predominantly in the

¹ This does not correspond with the ranking of the nationalities in the farm population for the state, however. For the state, the farm population of Scandinavian descent ranked first, those of German descent ranked second, while those of British descent were a lesser group.

Table 2. Age and Nativity of Respondents, Active and Retired

Age group	Foreign-born						Native-born					
	Total		Active		Retired		Total		Active		Retired	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
55-59	19	100.0	17	89.5	2	10.5	83	100.0	78	94.0	5	6.0
60-64	20	100.0	13	65.0	7	35.0	83	100.0	63	75.9	20	24.1
65-69	18	100.0	12	66.7	6	33.3	39	100.0	28	71.8	11	28.2
70-74	21	100.0	9	42.9	12	57.1	36	100.0	18	50.0	18	50.0
75-79	15	100.0	3	20.0	12	80.0	14	100.0	5	35.7	9	64.3
80 and over	4	100.0	1	25.0	3	75.0	8	100.0	2	25.0	6	75.0
Total	97	100.0	55	56.7	42	43.3	263	100.0	194	73.8	69	26.2

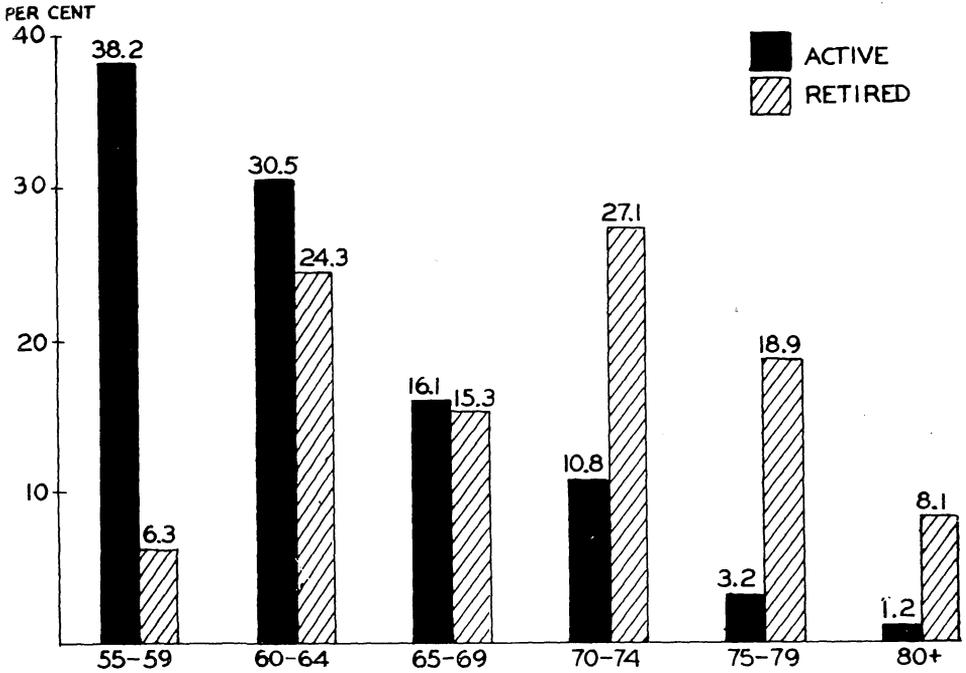


Fig. 2. Number and per cent of active and retired farmers in the survey, by age groups

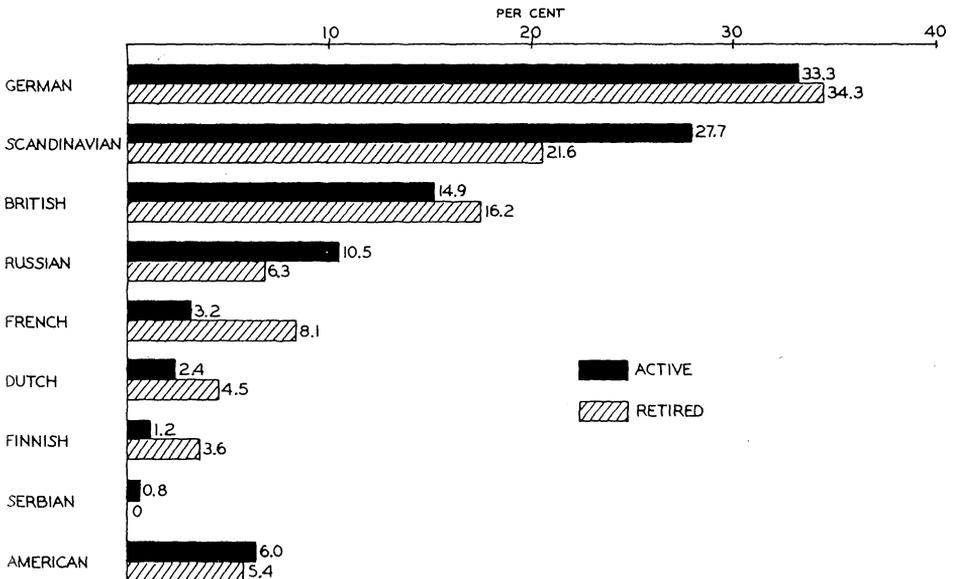


Fig. 3. Nationality of farmers in the sample, active and retired

Table 3. Total Foreign-Born Respondents by Age Groups and Age at Entry into the United States

Age group	Total	Age at entry			
		0-5	6-15	16-25	26-35
55-59	19	3	3	13	0
60-64	20	10	2	6	2
65-69	18	2	5	8	3
70-74	21*	3	5	12	0
75-79	15†	5	1	6	2
80 and over	4	1	0	2	1
Total	97	24	16	47	8

* One respondent entered at the age of 47.

† Age at entry not given for one respondent.

younger ages. Another factor might be that the percentage of tenancy has declined very much during World War II.

Time and Conditions of Retirement

Age and Year. Table 4 gives the ages at which the farmers retired, by age groups. It will be noted that more than 50 per cent retired before reaching age 65. Two operators retired before reaching 50, one as early as 45, and one at 47, while one operator reached 83 before retiring. The ages of 62 and 70 seem to be the popular years for retirement as far as this group is concerned. There were 13 who retired at 62 and 11 who retired at 70. The years of retirement are indicated in table 5. Contrary to a

Table 5. Year at Which Retired Farmers Terminated Farm Operation

Year	Number	Per cent
1909-1929	9	8.1
1930-1939	42	37.9
1940	6	5.4
1941	10	9.0
1942	15	13.5
1943	10	9.0
1944	19	17.1
Total	111	100.0

frequently expressed opinion, farmers retired at a relatively rapid rate during the war years, according to this survey. Approximately 40 per cent of the sample terminated farming after 1941.

Expected Retirement Age. Among the 249 active farmers, approximately two thirds, or 162, were undecided or said they "will never quit," while the balance hoped to retire at various ages. There were 17 who wanted to "quit now"; of these, four were in ill health but the majority felt they were too old for farming. Comparing tables 4 and 6, it will be noted that only four men among the active group had plans to retire before reaching 60, while among those farmers who have retired there were 20 who did so before reaching 60.

The age for retirement most frequently mentioned by the active respondents was 65. This point is significant in view of the fact that the Social Security Act, as now written, provides

Table 4. Age at Which Farmers Retired and Reason for Retirement

Age at retirement	Reason for retirement									
	Total		Ill health		Age		Other		None	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
45-54	9	8.1	5	8.5	0	0	2	13.3	2	28.6
55-59	11	9.9	8	13.5	0	0	3	20.0	0	0
60-64	38	34.2	20	33.9	9	30.0	5	33.3	4	57.1
65-69	27	24.3	12	20.3	11	36.7	3	20.0	1	14.3
70-74	17	15.3	8	13.6	8	26.7	1	6.7	0	0
75-79	8	7.2	6	10.2	1	3.3	1	6.7	0	0
80 and over	1	1.0	0	0	1	3.3	0	0	0	0
Total	111	100.0	59	100.0	30	100.0	15	100.0	7	100.0
Per cent of total number										
			53.2		27.0		13.5		6.3	

Table 6. Age at Which Active Farmers Intend to Retire and Their Reasons for Termination*

Expected age at retirement	Reason for termination									
	Total		Ill health		Age		Other		None	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
55-59	4	1.6	2	3.3	0	0	1	2.0	1	1.2
60-64	30	12.1	13	21.3	9	16.1	2	4.1	6	7.2
65-69	29	11.6	4	6.6	11	19.6	10	20.4	4	4.8
70-74	4	1.6	2	3.3	1	1.8	1	2.0	0	0
75 and over	3	1.2	0	0	2	3.6	1	2.0	0	0
Never	43	17.3	3	4.9	2	3.6	8	16.3	30	36.2
Quit now	17	6.8	4	6.6	10	17.9	3	6.2	0	0
Undecided	119	47.8	33	54.8	21	37.4	23	47.0	42	50.6
Total	249	100.0	61	100.0	56	100.0	49	100.0	83	100.0
Per cent of total number	100.0		24.5		22.5		19.7		33.3	

* In calculating "expected age" for those who replied "at the end of the war," the year 1946 was used.

for retirement at 65. It should be emphasized, however, that a considerable number expect to retire before reaching that age, also, that some expect to continue farming to advanced ages.

Reasons for Retirement. When the respondents were asked why they retired when they did, frequent responses were "poor health," "too old to work so hard," and the like; ill health is first,

age second, and a variety of reasons follow. Seven of the 111 had no reason.

Because illness was the most frequent reason given for termination of work, the retired farmers were asked what specific illness caused their retirement and the active farmers were asked what sort of illness they thought would necessitate their retirement. Their replies are given in figure 4. General poor

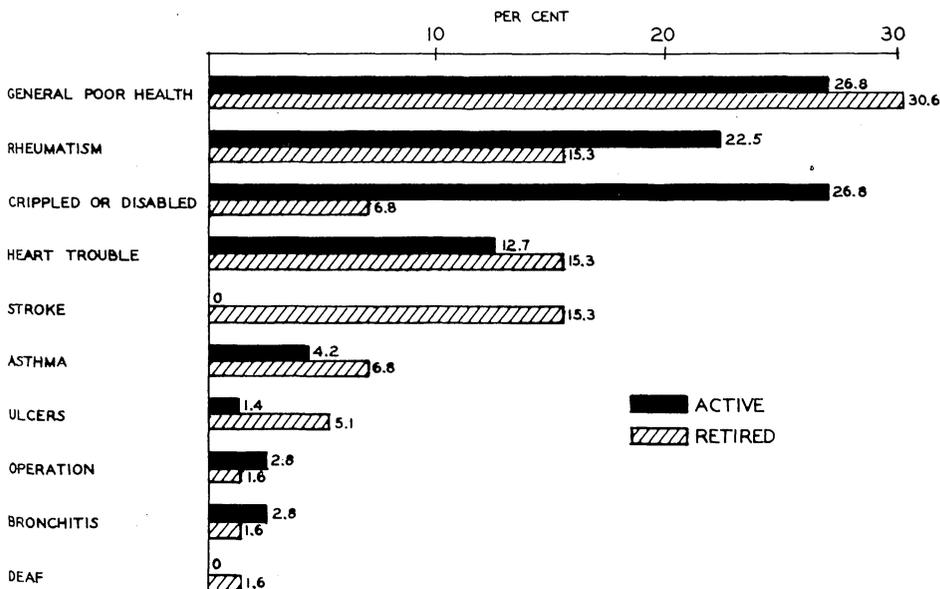


Fig. 4. Most frequent type of illness given as reason for retirement, active and retired

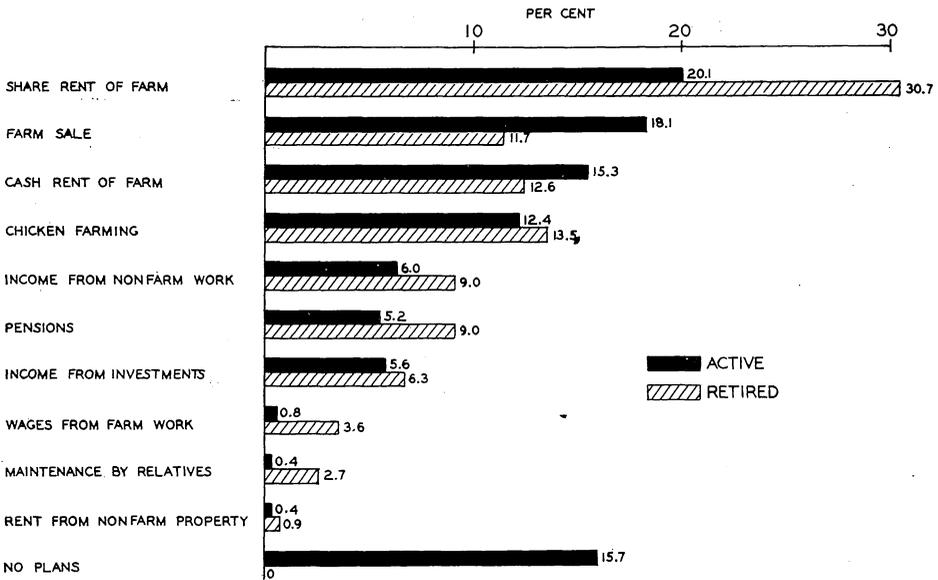


Fig. 5. Sources of income on termination, active and retired

health, rheumatism, crippled or disabled, and heart trouble ranked highest in the type of illness that contributed to retirement.

How Farmers Finance Their Retirement. The sources of income indicated by the respondents, active and retired, are given in figure 5. All but 13 of the retired group indicated their independence from public relief or from reliance upon relatives. The largest proportion of retired farmers, 43.3 per cent, depended on rent from the farm to finance their retirement, while 13.5 per cent depended on income from chicken farming and 11.7 per cent depended on income from the sale of their farms.

For the active farmers the picture is strikingly similar to that of the retired farmers. That is to say, this group expects to finance its retirement by rent, payments from the sale of the farm, and chicken farming. Significantly, slightly over 5 per cent definitely expect to apply for Old Age Assistance, but there was only one respondent who expected to be maintained by relatives.

Disposition of Farm on Termination.

Slightly over half, 52.3 per cent, of the retired respondents either sold or rented the farm to their children or turned the farm over to them for a nominal consideration when they retired from farming. In the case of the active farmers, 42.6 per cent of them expected their children to assume operation of the farm. Table 7 shows that approximately 20 per cent of the active group were undecided, but 12.9 per cent definitely plan to sell to others than their children.

However, the traditional pattern of transmitting farms from one generation to the next is manifest in the disposition of farms reported by both the active and retired farmers. Of the retired group of respondents, 89 reported having one or more sons; of the active group, 194 reported having sons. More than half, 52.2 per cent, of the retired operators' farms were turned over to sons, and 42.5 per cent of the active farmers expect their sons to take over the farm when they retire.

In the retired group the second son

Table 7. Disposition of Farm on Termination, Active and Retired

Disposition of farm	Total		Active		Retired	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
To children						
For nominal consideration	71	19.7	50	20.1	21	18.9
Rent	69	19.2	43	17.3	26	23.4
Sell	24	6.7	13	5.2	11	10.0
To others						
Rent	43	11.9	22	8.8	21	18.9
Sell	41	11.4	32	12.9	9	8.1
Rent part, sell part	18	5.0	15	6.0	3	2.7
Turn back to landlord	28	7.8	18	7.2	10	9.0
Put in charge of hired manager	8	2.2	3	1.2	5	4.5
Foreclosure	4	1.1	0	0	4	3.6
Never leave the farm	1	0.3	0	0	1	0.9
Undecided	53	14.7	53	21.3	0	0
Total	360	100.0	249	100.0	111	100.0

most often became the next operator. Seventeen farms were turned over to the second son, 12 to the first, and 10 to the third. In the active group it is most frequently expected that the oldest son will assume responsibility of the farm. In 49 cases the farm would go to the oldest son, and in only 16 to the second son and in 10 to the third son. However, it frequently happens that the farmer is not prepared to retire when the oldest son is ready to assume responsibility for farm operation. For example, a man who marries at 24 would probably be under 50 when his son reaches 24. Thus the oldest son often leaves the farm for another occupation or acquires a farm of his own before the father is ready to relinquish control.

The majority of the eight "other relatives" of the retired respondents and the nine of the active group to take over the farm were sons-in-law; one was a grandson, two were nephews, and one a brother. There were 14 farmers in the retired group who had turned their farms over to two or more sons, and 24 in the active group who expected to turn their farms over to two or more sons (figure 6).

Agreements between the retired

farmer and the operator were mostly informal when children were involved in the contract, but formal agreements were more common in the case of the dealings with nonrelatives. The expectations of the active farmers in this respect indicated formal agreements would be a little more popular even in cases when their own children were involved in the transaction, as indicated in table 8.

Respondents were asked as to the degree of control they exercised or expected to exercise over the farm on termination. Among the retired farmers 64 said they exercised no control, 19 slight control, 19 moderate, and 9 considerable. Among the active farmers the number who expect to exercise considerable control is only seven, a considerably smaller proportion than among the retired group.

Amount and Kind of Farm Work Done on Retirement. The farm work usually done by retired operators and the kind of work the active farmers expect to do is usually moderate or slight maintenance and repair work, chores, and helping with the harvest. Table 9 indicates only 17.5 per cent of the retired farmers did "considerable" work. Among the active farmers only

Table 8. Type of Agreement on Termination, Active and Retired

Disposition of farm	Type of agreement						
	Active				Retired		
	Total	Formal	In-formal	Undecided	Total	Formal	In-formal
To children							
For nominal consideration	50	17	13	20	21	3	18
Rent	43	12	19	12	26	9	17
Sell	13	2	1	10	11	10	1
To others							
Rent	22	14	4	4	21	12	9
Sell	32	24	0	8	9	9	0
Rent part, sell part	15	3	2	10	3	3	0
Turn back to landlord	18	1	0	17	10	9	1
Put in charge of hired manager	3	0	0	3	5	2	3
Foreclosure	0	0	0	0	4	4	0
Never leave farm	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Undecided	53	4	7	42	0	0	0
Total	249	77	46	126	111	61	50
Per cent	100.0	30.9	18.5	50.6	100.0	55.0	45.0

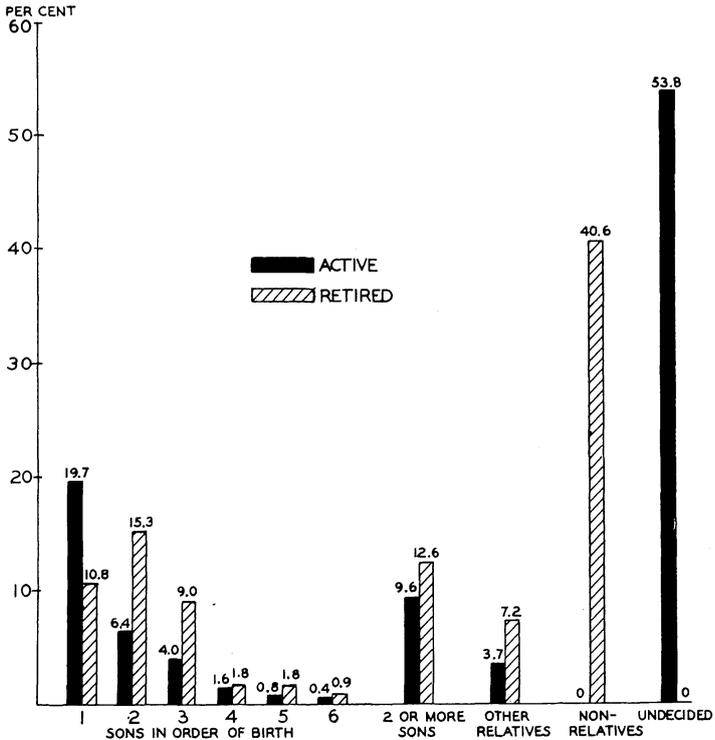


Fig. 6. Proportion of farms turned over to sons (in order of birth), other relatives, and nonrelatives, active and retired

Table 9. Amount and Kind of Work Done on Termination, Active and Retired

Kind of work	Number of answers	Amount of work done		
		Considerable	Moderate	Slight
Active				
Regular farm work	18	3	6	9
Harvest	43	2	14	27
Chores	49	6	20	23
Supervisory	9	3	2	4
Maintenance and repair	62	6	24	32
Total	181	20	66	95
Per cent	100.0	11.0	36.5	52.5
Retired				
Regular farm work	20	3	8	9
Harvest	32	2	13	17
Chores	33	4	7	22
Supervisory	6	4	1	1
Maintenance and repair	45	11	10	24
Other	13	2	7	4
Total	149	26	46	77
Per cent	100.0	17.5	30.9	51.6

11 per cent indicated they planned to do "considerable" work.

When asked how many days were worked during a year, only 83 of the retired farmers gave a reply. Of these, 30 said they did no work and 27 worked for only a month or less. There were 9 who worked 30 to 60 days, 9 who worked 60 to 90 days, and 8 who worked 121 days or more in a year's time. The active farmers who replied to this question expected to do no work at all or to put in not more than a month of active work.

Living Arrangements Following Retirement. Among the retired respondents, 51.4 per cent chose to stay on the

farm, as shown in table 10, and 48.6 per cent moved to town. Fifteen of those who stayed on the farm lived in a separate house from the farm operator, while 42 shared a house with the operator. Of those who moved to town, 45 moved into a house they owned previously and 9 rented a house.

The active farmers were not quite so evenly divided in their wishes as to a place to live as were the retired farmers. There were 110, or 44.2 per cent, who planned to stay on the farm, while 55.8 per cent of them expressed a desire to move to town. There were 44 who were undecided about living quarters, except a wish to live in the village.

Table 10. Living Arrangements on Termination, Active and Retired

Living arrangements	Active		Retired	
	Farm	Village	Farm	Village
On the farm				
In the same house	74	0	42	0
In separate house	36	0	15	0
In a village				
House owned by respondent	0	63	0	45
House built by respondent	0	4	0	0
House rented by respondent	0	28	0	9
Undecided	0	44	0	0
Total	110	139	57	54
Per cent	44.2	55.8	51.4	48.6

Farming and Tenure History

Of the retired farmers, 76 had engaged in no nonfarm employment throughout their working history. Of these, 55 had been farm operators from the beginning and 21 had had farm labor experience as well. In the case of the active farmers, 103 reported no nonfarm employment, of whom 61 had been farm operators from the beginning while 42 had also been farm laborers some time throughout their work history. The amount of time spent in farm operation and as farm laborers naturally varied with the age of the respondents, as indicated in table 11.

The number of farms operated by the respondents is given in table 12. The number varied from 1 to 13 but the majority of the retired farmers had operated no more than three farms. A considerable number of the active operators had operated four or five farms. The average number of years spent on each farm varied with the mobility of the farmers. The active group being younger showed that those 65 farmers reporting only one farm had an average of 30.8 years of operation, while the 41 retired farmers had an average of 36.4 years.

Tenure History. The agricultural ladder, which includes the hired hand, ten-

Table 11. Respondents by Age Groups with No Nonfarm Employment and Average Years Work, Active and Retired

Age groups	As farm operator only		As farm operator and farm laborer		
	Number respondents	Average years worked	Number respondents	Average years as operator	Average years as farm laborer
Active					
55-59	44	32.9	16	25.3	15.0
60-64	32	36.9	15	33.7	12.1
65-69	15	41.1	6	27.0	18.8
70 and over	12	47.3	5	44.0	11.6
Total	103	37.0	42	30.8	14.1
Retired					
55-59	4	28.3	2	23.0	6.5
60-64	23	28.7	5	30.0	19.4
65-69	12	36.9	4	29.8	12.3
70 and over	37	41.4	10	39.9	12.3
Total	76	36.2	21	34.0	13.4

Table 12. All Respondents by Number of Farms Operated and Average Years per Farm, Active and Retired

Number of farms operated	Active		Retired	
	Number of respondents	Average years per farm	Number of respondents	Average years per farm
1	65	30.8	41	36.4
2	59	14.4	32	17.5
3	54	11.5	12	10.4
4	22	7.4	8	9.0
5	23	7.7	9	7.1
6	8	4.9	4	8.3
7	11	5.5	2	4.3
8	2	4.6	2	4.3
9	3	4.5	0	0
10	0	0	1	3.6
13	2	2.6	0	0
Total	249		111	

Table 13. Tenure History of All Respondents, Active and Retired

Tenure	Number of respondents		Tenure	Number of respondents	
	Active	Retired		Active	Retired
<i>Full-owners</i>			<i>Part-owners</i>		
H-T-PO-O*	2	0	H-T-PO	2	0
H-T-O	25	7	H-O-PO	4	2
H-O	15	9	H and combinations	5	0
H and combinations	11	3	Always part-owner	6	3
Always owner	49	36	T-O-PO	4	0
PO-O	26	5	T-PO	4	2
T-O	21	16	O-PO	9	0
T-PO-O	8	2	Other combinations	6	5
O-PO-O	8	3			
Other combinations	9	7	Total	40	12
Total	174	88	<i>Tenants</i>		
			H-T	7	3
			H-T-O-T	3	2
			H and combinations	3	1
			Always tenants	7	0
			T-O-T	6	2
			Other combinations	9	3
			Total	35	11

* H—hired hand; T—tenant; PO—part-owner; O—owner.

ant, part-owner, and owner,² was completed in only two cases and both were active farmers, although there were 32 who went from hired man to tenant to owner (see table 13).

Of the 88 retired farmers who were owners on termination, 36 were always owners, 16 began as tenants and became owners, 9 went from hired man to owner status, and 7 started as hired men and then became tenants before becoming owners. The rest of the retired owners went through various other tenure changes. Twelve farmers were part-owner operators at the time of retirement. Of these, three had always been part-owners, two started as hired men and then became owners and lastly part-owners, while two were tenants before becoming part-owners. Among the 11 tenants, 6 began as hired men; 2 had become tenants, owners, and then tenants again.

Among the active farmers 174 were full-owners, of whom 49 had always been in this status since they began farm operation, 26 had moved from

part-owner to owner, 21 from tenant to owner, and 25 from hired man to tenant to owner.

Mobility

The mobility of the total sample is indicated in table 14. Only 51 respondents reported having moved over state lines; of these, 39 moved once, six moved twice, two moved three times, and four moved as many as four times. County boundaries were crossed by 58 farmers; of these, 38 had made one move, 13 had moved twice, two had made three moves, three had made four,

Table 14. Farm Moves Made Since Starting Farming

Number of moves made	Number of respondents having made	
	Interstate moves	Intercountry moves
1	39	38
2	6	13
3	2	2
4	4	3
5	0	2
Total	51	58

² A part-owner is one who owns part of the land which he operates and rents some in addition. An owner may have a mortgaged farm or one free of mortgage.

Table 15. Number of Shifts Made out of Farming, Active and Retired

Number of shifts made	Shifts out of farming			
	Active		Retired	
	Before 40 years old	After 40 years old	Before 40 years old	After 40 years old
1	13	3	9	4
2	4	1	0	0
3	1	0	0	0
Total	18	4	9	4

and two had made as many as five intercounty moves. No information was obtained as to the other moves of these people which did not involve crossing county or state lines.

The occupational stability of the farmers is indicated in table 15. Not only are these farmers stable geographically, but occupationally as well. Very few shifts were made out of farming by either the active or the retired group. Those moves that had been made were more frequently in the younger ages.

Table 16 indicates that only 13 of the active group and 5 of the retired group combined seasonal nonfarm employment with farming. For the active group the number of years of combined operation ranged from 4 to 33 years, and for the retired group this range was from 2 to 36 years.

Table 16. Respondents by Number of Years Spent in Part-time or Seasonal Employment Combined with Farming, Active and Retired

Number of years	Number of respondents	
	Active	Retired
2	0	1
4	1	0
5	1	0
7	1	0
8	1	0
9	1	0
10	0	1
14	1	0
16	1	2
17	1	0
19	1	0
28	1	0
30	1	0
31	1	0
33	1	0
36	0	1
Total	13	5

Work History, Nonfarm

Of the 249 active operators, 146 said they had done some other work besides that of farm operator. Of these, 78 had done farm labor, 16 had been self employed, and 106 had "other" employment. Since some were reported in two or more categories, the total of the separate classes exceeds the number of persons involved. The "other" employment was divided into "covered" and "noncovered" employment. The "covered" employment is made up of occupations that are now covered by Social Security, and "noncovered" is employment not covered by Social Security. Twenty-six reported a total of 196 years, or an average of 7.5 years, of noncovered employment.

In the retired operator group 35 had done other work besides farming. The employment history, by age of operator and average number of years employed, is given in table 17.

Community Relations

Only 41 of the 360 respondents at the time of the survey were not taking part in community activities—20 of the active group and 21 of the retired group. Church affiliation and religious activities ranked highest among reported types of community organizations.

In tabulating replies the following general classification was followed: councilman, town clerk, rationing boards, chamber of commerce, Kiwanis, American Legion, and like organiza-

Table 17. Farmers with Nonfarm Employment by Type of Employment and Average Years Spent in Each, Active and Retired

Age groups	Years spent				Years spent				Years spent			
	Farm operation		Farm labor		Self employed		Covered employment		Noncovered employment		Unemployed	
	Number	Average	Number	Average	Number	Average	Number	Average	Number	Average	Number	Average
Active												
55-59	51	23.5	34	11.2	6	5.0	28	11.1	10	5.5	2	6.0
60-64	44	30.5	25	14.5	6	5.7	21	11.5	6	3.0	0	0
65-69	25	29.7	13	12.3	3	2.0	14	13.5	5	8.4	1	2.0
70 and over	26	36.8	6	11.3	1	9.0	16	14.1	5	15.0	0	0
Total	146	29.1	78	12.4	16	4.9	79	12.3	26	7.5	3	4.6
Retired												
55-59	3	23.0	2	10.5	0	0	3	8.7	0	0	0	0
60-64	4	32.5	2	3.5	1	5.0	2	5.5	0	0	1	4.0
65-69	5	32.2	2	6.0	0	0	4	11.5	1	7.0	0	0
70 and over	23	30.9	4	11.5	8	5.2	18	10.1	2	8.0	0	0
Total	35	30.6	10	8.6	9	5.2	27	9.8	3	7.7	1	4.0

tions were tabulated under civic and government; cooperatives, oil associations, farm unions, and like organizations were called economic; dairy associations, Farm Bureau, etc., were tabulated under farm organizations; any fraternal organization was classed as lodge; any educational activity such as school boards, PTA, etc., came under school.

Two hundred and twenty-nine active operators reported 311 organizations with 340 activities, and 90 of the retired group reported 114 organizations and 126 activities (see table 18).

Children and Family

The average number of children was 4.5 for the retired group and 4.2 for the active group. For the retired group the respondents of German origin had the largest number of children per family, an average of 5.0, while those of Scandinavian origin in the active group had the largest number with an average of 4.7 (table 19).

Respondents in the retired group 80 years or older had the largest families with an average of 5.7 children. In the active group those respondents in the age group 75 to 79 had the largest average number of children, 6.1 (table 20). The children were divided into three groups: (1) all children under 16, (2) sons and daughters 16 years old or older at home, and (3) sons and daughters 16 years old or over away from home.

In the retired group more than twice as many sons 16 years or older than daughters remained on the farm. Likewise, for the active respondents more sons than daughters remained on the farm.

Occupations of Children. The occupations of the children are given in table 21. The choice of occupation for the greatest number of children was farming, 40.2 per cent and 44.6 per cent for the active and retired operators' groups, respectively. Of all children at home the largest proportion is working on the home farm and the second largest is still in school.

Table 18. Respondents by Type of Organization with Which They Are Affiliated, Active and Retired

Type of organization	Active		Retired	
	Number reporting	Number of activities	Number reporting	Number of activities
Civic and government	26	26	4	4
Economic	36	47	13	18
Farm	53	61	14	18
Lodge	18	20	7	8
School	24	24	2	2
Religious	154	162	74	76
No organization	20	0	21	0
Total	331	340	135	126

Table 19. Number of Children by Nationality of Respondents, Active and Retired

Nationality of respondent	Active			Retired		
	Total respondents	Total number children	Average number children	Total respondents	Total number children	Average number children
German	83	345	4.2	38	190	5.0
Scandinavian	69	324	4.7	24	84	3.5
British	37	102	2.8	18	68	3.8
American	15	59	3.9	6	13	2.2
All others	45	221	4.9	25	146	5.8
Total	249	1,051	4.2	111	501	4.5

Table 21. Occupations of Children of Respondents, Active and Retired

Occupations	Children in given occupation		Children at home				Children away from home			
			Male		Female		Male		Female	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
ACTIVE										
Farming	208	19.8	147	71.0	48	39.6	12	4.1	1	0.2
On own farm	214	20.4	0	0	0	0	85	29.2	129	29.9
Housewife*	156	14.8	0	0	0	0	0	0	156	36.1
Skilled	67	6.4	3	1.4	2	1.7	36	12.4	26	6.0
Semiskilled	27	2.6	0	0	1	0.8	20	6.9	6	1.4
Clerical	83	7.9	0	0	6	4.9	12	4.1	65	15.0
Professional	36	3.4	0	0	2	1.7	8	2.8	26	6.0
Laborer	2	0.2	0	0	0	0	2	0.7	0	0
Domestic	12	1.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	2.8
Student	109	10.4	47	22.7	52	43.0	2	0.7	8	1.9
Armed Forces	113	10.7	0	0	0	0	111	38.1	2	0.5
Disabled	19	1.8	8	3.9	8	6.6	2	0.7	1	0.2
Not working†	5	0.5	2	1.0	2	1.7	1	0.3	0	0
Total	1,051	100.0	207	100.0	121	100.0	291	100.0	432	100.0
RETIRED										
Farming	100	19.9	75	89.3	20	52.6	3	1.7	2	1.0
On own farm	124	24.7	0	0	0	0	58	32.6	66	32.8
Housewife*	90	18.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	90	44.7
Skilled	42	8.4	2	2.4	1	2.6	30	16.8	9	4.5
Semiskilled	18	3.6	0	0	0	0	14	7.9	4	2.0
Clerical	25	5.0	0	0	3	7.9	9	5.0	13	6.5
Professional	19	3.8	0	0	3	7.9	8	4.5	8	4.0
Laborer	4	0.8	0	0	0	0	4	2.2	0	0
Domestic	1	0.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.5
Student	12	2.4	6	7.1	6	15.8	0	0	0	0
Armed Forces	52	10.4	0	0	0	0	48	27.0	4	2.0
Disabled	8	1.6	1	1.2	2	5.3	3	1.7	2	1.0
Not working†	6	1.2	0	0	3	7.9	1	0.6	2	1.0
Total	501	100.0	84	100.0	38	100.0	178	100.0	201	100.0

* Housewife (other than farm).

† Not working or unknown.

Of the active operators' children away from home, the largest proportion of sons, 38.1 per cent, was in the armed forces; and the largest proportion of daughters, 36.1 per cent, was married to men other than farmers. Of the retired operators' children away from home the greatest proportion of sons was in farming and the second largest proportion was in the armed forces. Of daughters away from home 44.7 per cent were married to men other than farmers.

The least proportion of children in any occupation was 0.2 per cent working as laborers and 1.1 per cent doing domestic work. There was a total of 27 children who were disabled.

Summary

The popular ages for retirement of the retired farmer group were 62 and 70. Active farmers most frequently mentioned 65 as the age for probable retirement.

Contrary to a frequently expressed opinion, farmers have retired at a rapid rate during the war years, according to this survey.

Ill health is given more frequently than any other as a reason for retirement, with age coming second. General poor health, rheumatism, crippled and disabled, and heart trouble ranked highest in the types of illness that contributed to retirement.

The largest number of retired farmers depended on rent from the farm to finance their retirement; the second important source of income was chicken farming; third was income from the sale of their farms. The active farmers expect to finance their retirement by rent, payments from the sale of the farm, and through chicken farming.

Over half of the retired respondents either sold or rented their farms to their children or turned the farm over to them for a nominal consideration. Among the retired farmers the second

son most often took over the farm, with the first and third following in order; but the active farmers more frequently expected the oldest son to assume responsibility of the farm when the father retired.

The type of agreement between the retired farmer and the succeeding operator was mostly informal when children were involved in the contract; but formal agreements were more common in the case of the dealings with non-relatives. The active farmers, in this respect, indicated formal agreements would be a little more popular even in cases where children were involved in the transaction.

The vast majority of the retired farmers exercise little or no control over the farm on termination of farming. Expectations of the active farmers are to do likewise.

The farm work usually done by retired operators and that which the active farmers expect to do is moderate or slight maintenance and repair work, chores, and helping with the harvest.

A choice of a place to live on the farm or in a village after retiring from farming was very evenly divided among the retired respondents; 51.4 per cent chose to stay on the farm and 48.6 per cent moved to town. The active farmers' wishes were only a little less evenly divided; 44.2 per cent planned to stay on the farm while 55.8 per cent expressed a desire to move to town.

The choice of occupation for the greatest number of children of both the retired and active farmer groups was farming.

Conclusions

The fact that all but about 12 per cent of the retired farmers in the sample were able to finance their retired years without pensions or aid from relatives, and that less than 6 per cent of the active farmers expected to be dependent on such sources,

raises a question as to the necessity of a general retirement plan for farm operators in Minnesota. The question deserves further consideration than can justifiably be given to it in this bulletin, but the following points may be mentioned:

(1) It should be borne in mind that the study was made during unusually prosperous years of World War II, when the financial condition of retired farmers was good, and that of the active farmers probably never better. A quite different report might have been made had a survey similar to this been made in 1934.

(2) The sample included in the survey cannot be regarded as adequate in all respects. Tenants are apparently underrepresented, unless it should be demonstrated that the rate of tenancy in Minnesota declined very remarkably during World War II.

(3) Finally, should anyone contemplate using these data as argument against extending Old Age and Survivors' Insurance to farmers—and it is hoped no one will—he should first carefully examine the whole proposed program from the standpoint of other advantages involved in addition to that

of providing security for old age. Among these is the survivors' insurance principle, which is of great importance. This survey includes only the lucky ones who survived to age 55 or later, and does not tell the story of all those who began the race but were unable to continue. Whether they dropped out because of death, disabling disease, or economic reverses, the insurance program which now covers other occupational groups and that which is proposed for farmers and other self-employed would have brought to them or their families a degree of financial security that in all probability they did not have.³

(4) One of the chief considerations in setting up a retirement plan for farmers is the favorable effect it might have in encouraging retirement from active farm operation at earlier ages than many farmers now contemplate. The significance of such a result lies in the improved opportunities for young people on farms to enter the business of farming.

³ For an excellent and authoritative discussion of the whole question of social insurance covering old age and retirement, see Murray R. Benedict, "A Retirement System for Farmers," National Planning Association, 800 21st St. N.W., Washington, D. C.