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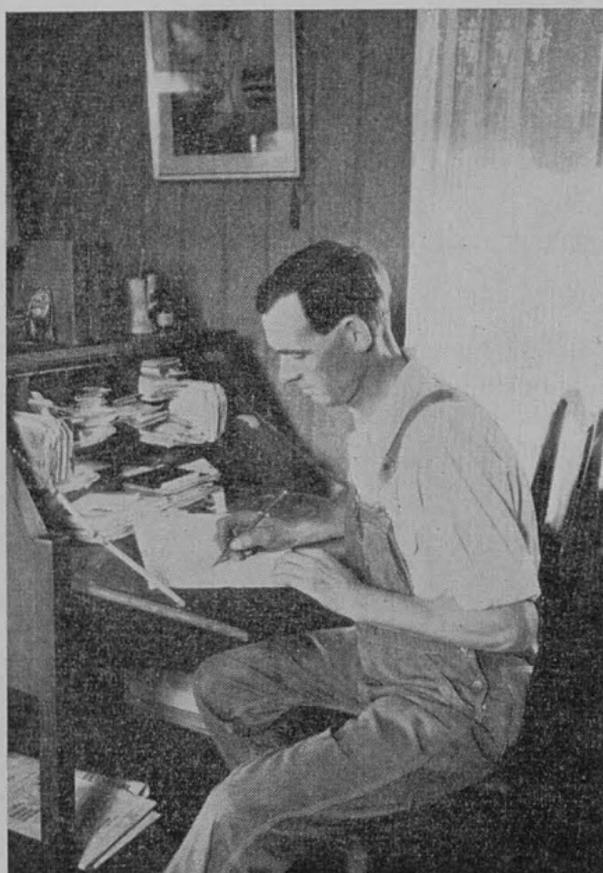
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The Organized
**FARM MANAGEMENT
SERVICE**

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THE organized Farm Management Service is a means by which farmers may determine whether or not their farms are yielding the income that they have a right to expect and if not, why not. It provides a system by which each farmer can tell whether or not the crops he is raising, the livestock he is carrying, the power and equipment he has provided are the ones that make the best paying combination for his farm. Based on the facts of his own business, it enables each man to see for himself just what adjustments might be made that would be likely to yield him a greater net income.

How It Operates

The typical farm management service includes a group of from 150 to 200 farmers who band themselves into an association and establish a working arrangement with the Department of Agriculture of the University for carrying on the service. The farmers and the University agree on the funds necessary for carrying on the service and the portion to be paid by each. The farmers'

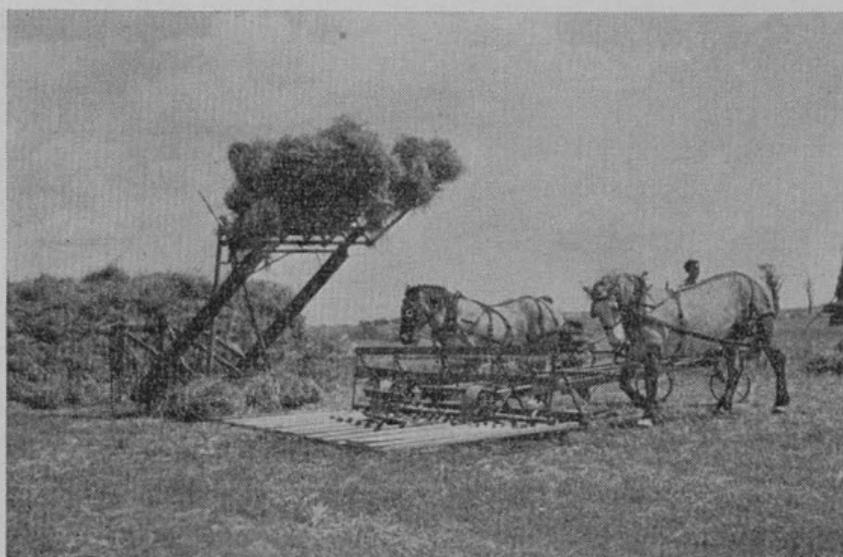


Fig. 1. A good cropping system is one of the first essentials of a successful farm business. Efficient use of power and machinery is also important.

share is paid as annual fees for the individual services received. The balance of the cost is paid by the University in return for the research and teaching values of the information obtained.

Each farmer keeps a record of his farm business, including cash income and expenses, quantities of products bought and sold, acreages and yields of farm crops, kinds and numbers of livestock raised, and other information. These records are summarized by farm management workers at the University at the end of the year and form the basis of the improvements suggested for the following years.

Field Service

An important feature of the organized farm management service is the field service. A fieldman, employed on a full-time basis, goes from farm to farm, partly to assist with the record keeping so that the records will be complete and comparable, but more to assist in interpreting the records already kept and in applying them to the business of the farm. The fieldman needs to be a man well trained in farm management and equipped by experience and native ability to assist the farmer members in their farm management problems.

How Many Members

There should be as many members in the association as one fieldman can serve. This seems to be somewhere between 150 and 200. The larger the number, the more there are to carry the cost. On the other hand, if there are too many, the fieldman can not get to each farm as often as he should. The fieldman usually plans to visit each farm about four times a year.

Area Covered by One Association

The ideal arrangement would be one in which all the members lived within a small area, in not more than three or four adjacent counties. The

members could then be under fairly uniform conditions as to soil type, rainfall, and markets. It would require a minimum of time and travel expense for the fieldman to go from farm to farm.

If necessary to cover a larger area in order to reach enough interested persons, however, a service covering eight to ten moderate-sized counties is not impractical. If the members cooperate well with the fieldman in connection with his visits, so he does not have to retrace his steps to accommodate members who were away from home, the extra distance is not serious.

Records Kept

The farm records of the individual farmers are kept on a practical basis, just as any good farmer would wish to keep for his own information. A record book is supplied to each farmer with space for an annual inventory of farm property, records of all purchases and sales, crops raised, feed fed to livestock, and similar records. Detailed labor records are not kept. Space is provided for household and personal records separate from those of



Fig. 2. Farmers are interested to learn the most practical livestock methods. Definite records of gains made and feed used are needed to check the advantages of the various methods employed.

the farm business. The experience of hundreds of farmers over a span of many years has indicated that the records kept are on a practical, common-sense basis.

Privacy of the Records

Since the records of each farmer constitute an intimate account of his private business, great care is taken by the fieldman and the workers at the University that no information about an individual record is ever used without the farmer's consent. The individual records, while in the hands of the University for purposes of summarization, are carefully guarded so they will not be made public; they are not available to any other department of government, nor to anyone but the farmer himself.

Averages of the group of records and conclusions drawn from the records are, however, considered suitable for publication and for teaching work generally. In fact, one of the great values of the service is the opportunity which each member has of comparing the records of his own farm with the averages of the group.

Cost of the Service

There are two main elements of cost in a service of this kind. One is the salary and travel expenses of the fieldman; the other is the cost of summarizing the records at the end of the year. The number of members in an association, the type of person employed as fieldman, the extent of the records kept, the thoroughness with which they are analyzed, the amount which the University has available as its contribution to the service all influence the size of the fee which must be paid by each member.

Association fees of this kind in Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, and Kansas vary from \$15 to \$50 a year per member. One association in Minnesota has a fee for each member of \$15 per year. The associa-

tions in Iowa operate on the basis of a variable fee, depending on the size of the farm, from \$15 as the minimum to \$25 as the maximum.

Continuity of Records

The farm management service becomes increasingly valuable when carried on over a period of years. This is true partly because one becomes better acquainted with the details of the service and thus is better able to use the various aids that the service provides, but the greatest value is received through being able to view the farm business in the light of records of several years and to make adjustments of a long-time nature. Farming is a business that changes slowly, and the records and the adjustments that cover a period of years are the ones of greatest value. Should the reader like to study the way the business of one farm was adjusted through this type of service, he is referred to **EXTENSION BULLETIN 155, A Well Planned Farm Business.**

How To Organize

While the University is not in a position to agree in advance that it can cooperate with all the groups that may wish to organize such a service, yet it is always ready to consult with interested groups about the possibilities of a service in any locality. It may be that an existing service can be utilized or its area adjusted to accommodate such demands. Or, it may be possible to set up entirely new units. In any event, persons interested are invited to contact their county agents and discuss the possibilities of securing this service.

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