

# AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE REPORT

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

AD-FO-2532

December, 1984

## EXTENSION CLIENTELE SURVEY APRIL 1983 THROUGH MARCH 1984

John S. Hoyt Jr.  
Professor Emeritus and  
Consultant to the Director

APR 2 1985  
ST. PAUL CAMPUS LIBRARIES

### BACKGROUND

The Agricultural Extension Service is the major educational outreach unit of the University of Minnesota. Its primary educational delivery mode is through the direct contacts made by extension county agent staff located in 91 offices in Minnesota's 87 counties. Educational delivery is also accomplished through the media--print and nonprint--and through direct and indirect contacts made by extension faculty on the university coordinate campuses (largely the St. Paul campus) and in a number of area agent offices throughout the state.

The extension service conducts its educational efforts under the rubric of four major program areas: agriculture, home economics and family living, 4-H and youth development, and community and natural resource development. The effectiveness of its programs is measured in a variety of ways. In some cases carefully designed studies of the economic or behavioral impacts of particular programs are undertaken and objective measurements of effectiveness made. In others, post-program evaluations are made by participants. In still others, the evaluation is more judgmental and is based on items such as number of participants and repeat demand for the particular program.

Extension does not routinely collect socioeconomic data about its clientele. As a result, although we know we serve "farmers," "families," "small business," "youth," "communities," "educators," and the "public sector," we have not, in any rigorous manner, been able to answer the question: "Who does the Agricultural Extension Service really serve?"

In late 1982, extension director Dr. Norman A. Brown authorized the design and implementation of a statistical survey of extension's clientele. The study was to measure and describe the recipients of educational programs delivered by county extension agents. The clientele to be surveyed were limited to those with whom this faculty had direct contact by telephone, by individual letter, by a visit to the county office by the client, by a visit to the home or place of business of the client, or by direct participation by the client in an educational meeting held by the county office. Excluded, because of the difficulty of objective measurement, were clientele who received educational information delivered by extension through indirect contact methods such as radio, television, news publications, newsletters, and computer networks. Also excluded were clientele participating in educational programs delivered by campus-based or area faculty.

### STUDY DESIGN

The survey developed was to cover one full year (in part because of a suspected seasonal variation in program delivery to various types of clientele); was to account for variations in sampling unit size; and needed to be weighted so that the day of the week on which the sampling units administered the survey reflected daily variations in contacts.

**The Sample.** There were 91 sampling units (county offices), each with 260 potential sampling days. Information from annual clientele contact participation (slight counts for civil rights and equal program opportunity purposes prepared for the federal office of the extension service (ES-USDA)) was available. Each sampling unit was weighted, in a consecutive numerical series, so that the frequency with which it might be drawn on a random basis was related to an estimate of "total contacts." The samples were independently drawn for each quarter in the survey year. In addition, extension district directors were asked, on the basis of empirical knowledge, to estimate the relative weight of contacts by day of the week for their district for each of the four quarters. A quarterly sample size of 30 sampling days was established. Thirty county offices were randomly selected for each quarter. The week that the survey was to be administered in each office was determined by a repeated random drawing. The day of the week was determined by measuring, from the weighted sequence of numbers for each office, the distance from the first number in that office's sequence to the random number drawn. In addition, in an effort to minimize any "preplanning" for the selected survey days, county offices were not notified of the actual day of the survey administration until one week before that date. A map showing the distribution of the resultant sample is included in this report.

**The Survey Instrument.** The survey instrument was designed by the author with input from the director, from Professor Martin, and from a number of extension faculty. It was pretested in two counties and minor changes consequently made. A copy of the survey instrument may be obtained from the author.

**The Survey Process.** The goal of 120 survey dates was accomplished without significant difficulty. The cooperation of the faculty and staff in every office was outstanding. In addition, the cooperation of the clientele in completing the survey instrument was little short of remarkable. Some 96 percent of the clientele who were asked to complete the survey instrument did so in a manner that made their input usable.

This archival publication may not reflect current scientific knowledge or recommendations.  
Current information available from University of Minnesota Extension: <http://www.extension.umn.edu>.

## THE SURVEY RESULTS

The results of the survey are illustrated in the tables and figures that follow. Several general observations should be made as a guide to the reader.

	<u>AG</u>	<u>HE</u>	<u>4H</u>	<u>CNRD</u>	<u>OTHER</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Female	13	36	41	3	7	100
Male	51	6	28	6	9	100
All	30	24	37	5	9	100

The total estimated number of contacts, 2,033,840, is consistent with other, independent, estimates and is estimated to have a probability of error of less than 10 percent. The estimate does take into account the fact that a client may make contact with a county extension office more than once a year. (The survey results cannot be construed as an estimate that extension reaches one of every two individuals in the 1980 state population of just over four million persons). The data do not permit an estimate of the average number of contacts per client per year.

There is no singular profile of the average client who contacts the Agricultural Extension Service for educational services. There are, however, some characteristics that describe the mix of our clientele and the over two million direct contacts they made during the survey year.

Roughly two-fifths were by telephone; two-fifths by a form of direct, face-to-face, contact; and the remainder by letter. Three out of ten contacts related to the agricultural industry--production, processing, marketing, and distribution; about one-quarter to home economics and family living; three-eighths to 4-H and youth development (across all subject matter areas); and about one in ten to the issues and problems facing Minnesota's communities and resources.

The average age of the clientele was 37, and nearly three-quarters were between the ages of 17 and 55. The remainder were nearly equally divided between those younger than 17 and older than 55.

Almost all (96.9 percent) of the clientele were employed at the time of the contact. Nearly 20 percent were engaged in farming and 88 percent of these were family farmers. Another 17 percent were employed in a business and one in four of these owned their own business. Of the businesses, 46 percent employed fewer than ten persons and 40 percent employed from 10 to 100 persons. Of those indicating their occupation as homemaker--36 percent of the total contacts--almost one-third were also employed outside the home; 90 percent were married and 89 percent of their marriage partners were employed.

Some 25 percent of the clientele were engaged in educational endeavors, 32 percent as educators and 68 percent as students. Of those identifying themselves as students, 87 percent were in grades K-12. In addition, almost 10 percent of the respondents listed 'government' as an occupational category with the county and state levels of government as the predominate categories.

Fifty-nine percent of the clientele were female. The gender breakdown by extension program area, in percent, was as follows:

The distribution of farm sizes in the survey sample was remarkably close to the size distribution of all farms in the state. The average reported farm size of the 8.9 percent who indicated Hobby Farmers was 62 acres; of Family Farms, 439 acres; and, of the 2.9 percent who indicated Corporate Farms, 1165 acres.

Finally, the survey established clearly that the time of the year, by calendar quarter, has little effect on the level of extension educational program delivery. Except for a slight decrease in the coldest months (January-March) and offsetting increase in the spring (April-June) the level of program effort was relatively constant throughout the year.

The tables and figures represent a picture of the clientele extension reached during the survey year. They do not reflect a judgment of what the distribution "should" be. Further, as extension program priorities and resource allocations change over time in response to new and emerging issues, the clientele reached will undoubtedly change. This survey thus serves as a measure of "what is" and as a potential guide for future change.

## CREDITS

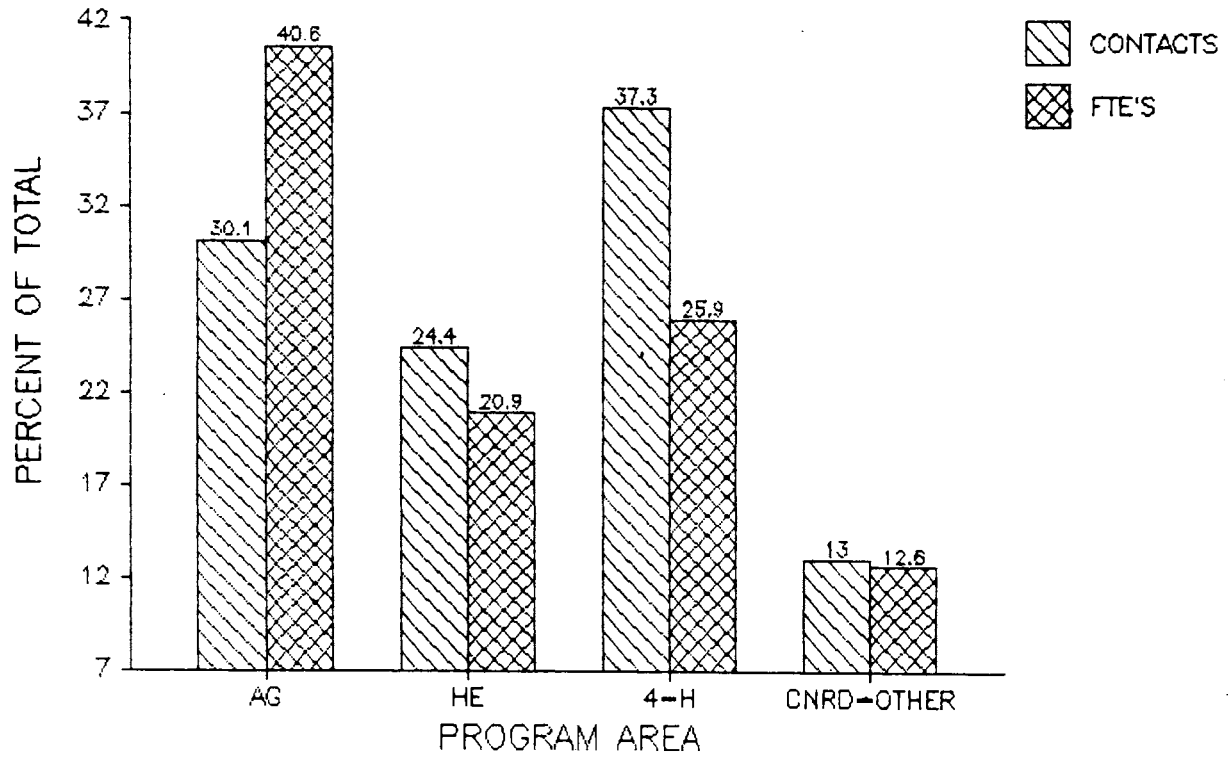
The survey could not have been undertaken, designed, administered, and analyzed without the wholehearted cooperation of many individuals and groups. Not all can be recognized by name, but a few deserve a special thanks. They include: Dr. Norman A. Brown, former director of the Agricultural Extension Service (1980-84), for his approval of the study and the allocation of the resources needed; Associate Professor Frank B. Martin of the Department of Applied Statistics, for his voluntary giving of time, expertise, and consultation in design, implementation and analysis; Tom Borer, administrative volunteer intern, for assistance in design and pretesting; Denise Wells, senior secretary, for managing survey form distribution and collection from April-June 1983; Sheri Bierl, senior secretary and lead PC operator, for taking on Denise Wells' duties from July 1983-March 1984 and co-consulting on the analyses and the IBM-PC program designs for final tables and graphs; and, Nick Harens, Senior Analyst/Programmer, for supervising data entry and generating analytical output. In addition, the extension district directors, the personnel of the 61 county offices who administered the survey instrument, and the 11,186 individuals who cooperated in completing the survey all deserve a vote of appreciation for making the study possible.

The persons and groups above deserve any credit that is due. As always, errors of commission or omission remain the sole responsibility of the author.

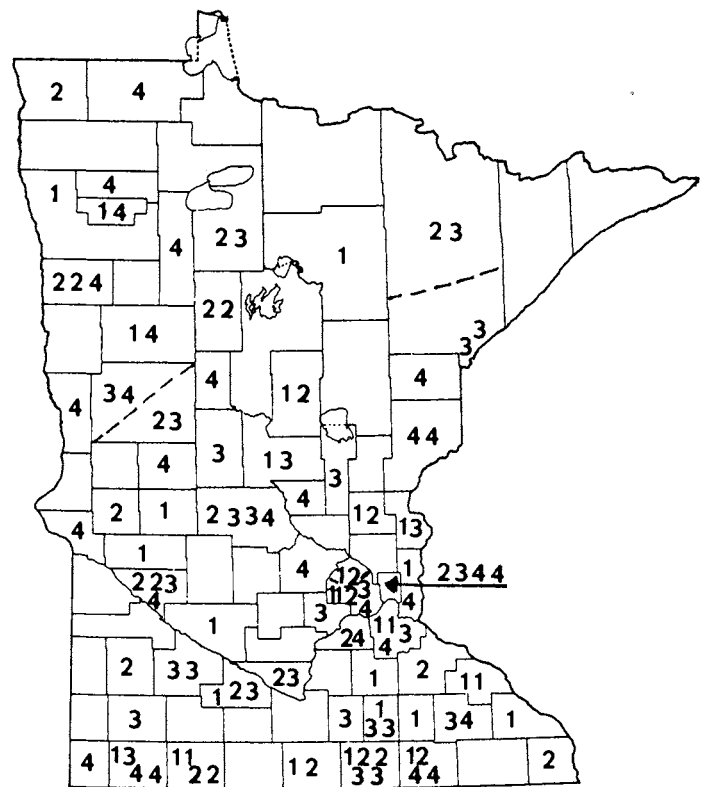
**TABLE 1. MINNESOTA AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE CLIENTELE SURVEY**  
**Summary of Estimated Total Annual Clientele Contacts**

SURVEY QUESTION CATEGORY SUBCATEGORY	NUMBER OF ANNUAL CONTACTS	PERCENT BY CATEGORY - SUBCATEGORY	COMMENTS
<b>TOTAL - ALL CONTACTS RESPONSES:</b>	2,033,840		
BY SEX	1,919,945	100.0%	91 percent of the respondents indicated their sex.
FEMALE	1,136,917	59.2%	
MALE	783,028	40.8%	
BY AGE GROUP	1,637,241	100.0%	It is of interest to note that the average age of all respondents was 37 years. 78.3 percent of the respondents answered the age question.
1 - 16	201,350	12.3%	
17 - 55	1,210,135	73.9%	
56 +	225,756	13.8%	
BY CONTACT METHOD	1,974,859		97.1 percent of the survey response indicated a method of contact.
TELEPHONE	803,367	40.7%	
LETTER	370,159	18.7%	
WALK-IN	327,448	16.6%	
HOME VISIT	54,914	2.8%	
MEETING	418,971	21.2%	
BY PROGRAM AREA	1,956,554		96.2 percent of the responses indicated the subject matter (program area) for that contact. In some cases multiple subject matter were covered in the same contact.
AGRICULTURE	589,814	30.1%	
HOME ECONOMICS	477,952	24.4%	
4-H	730,149	37.3%	
CNRD	87,455	4.5%	
OTHER	166,775	8.5%	
BY OCCUPATION	1,952,486		96 percent of the respondents answered the 'Occupation' question. As was to be expected, individuals did indicate multiple occupations.
FARMER	353,888	18.1%	
HOBBY	30,508	8.6%	
FAMILY	311,178	87.9%	
CORPORATE	10,169	2.9%	
SUBCHAPTER S	2,034	.6%	
BUSINESS	323,381	16.6%	
OWNER	85,421	26.4%	
SALARIED	183,046	56.6%	
HOURLY	52,880	16.4%	
BUSINESS SIZE	256,264	13.1%	'Business Size' (i.e. number of employees) was a subquestion and the 13.1 percent figure is not a part of the 'Occupation' % total. The 'Government' subcategories will include, both in numbers and percentages, totals greater than Government as an occupation because of multiple responses related to 'Government Type'.
LESS THAN 10	117,963	46.0%	
10-100	101,692	39.7%	
OVER 100	36,609	14.3%	
GOVERNMENT	183,046	9.4%	'Government, Type' (of relationship) is not a part of the 'Occupation' percentage total.
FEDERAL	38,643	21.1%	
STATE	73,218	40.0%	
COUNTY	99,658	54.4%	
CITY	6,102	3.3%	
TOWNSHIP	2,034	1.1%	
GOVERNMENT TYPE	101,692	5.2%	
ELECTED	18,305	18.0%	
APPOINTED	79,320	78.0%	
VOLUNTEER	2,034	2.0%	
HOMEMAKER	703,709	36.0%	
EMPLOYED - YES	202,668	28.8%	
EMPLOYED - NO	501,040	71.2%	
HOMEMAKER-SPOUSE EMPLOY.	648,795	33.2%	Again, the 'Spouse' questions were a sub-category of the 'Homemaker' occupation and the 33.2 percent is not a part of 'Occupation' total.
SPOUSE EMPLOYED - YES	516,595	79.6%	
SPOUSE EMPLOYED - NO	65,083	10.0%	
NO SPOUSE	67,117	10.3%	
STUDENT	333,550	17.1%	
K - 12TH	288,805	86.6%	
POST SECONDARY	36,609	11.0%	
GRADUATE SCHOOL	8,135	2.4%	
EDUCATION	156,606	8.0%	
TEACHER	58,981	37.7%	
ED ADMINISTRATOR	28,474	18.2%	
EDUCATION - OTHER	58,981	37.7%	
ELEMENTARY/SECONDARY	24,406	15.6%	
POST SECONDARY	34,575	22.1%	
BY UNEMPLOYED CATEGORY	63,461	3.1%	Only 3.1 percent of the respondents indicated that they were unemployed at the time of their survey response.
LOOKING FOR WORK	20,338	43.5%	
NOT LOOKING FOR WORK	26,440	56.5%	

# FIGURE 1: CLIENTELE CONTACTS AND STAFF EFFORT COMPARISONS

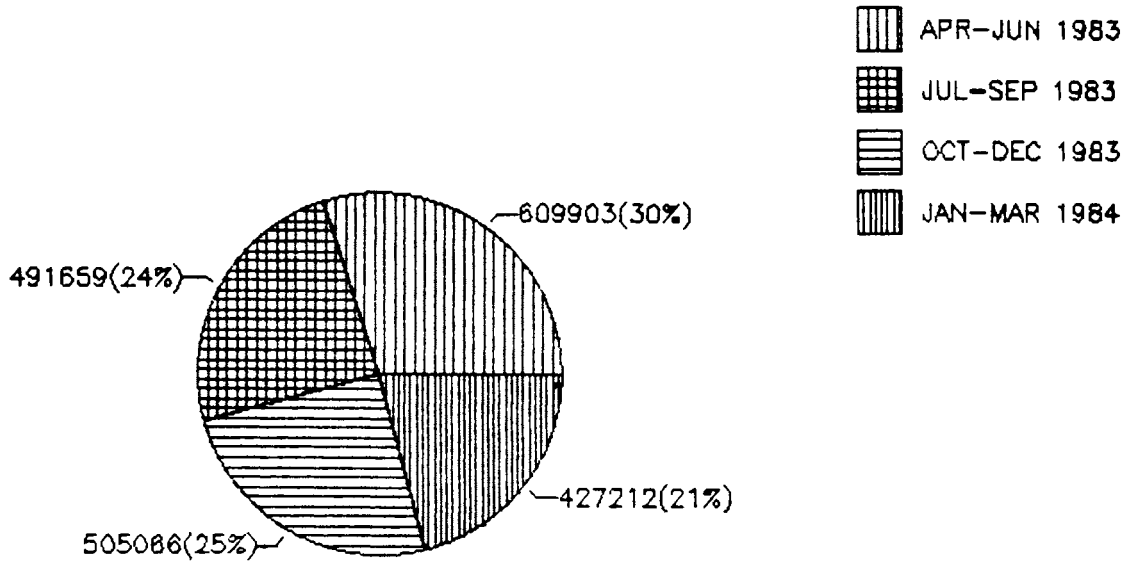


**Figure 1**, above, compares the survey-measured clientele contacts during the survey year with the current (November, 1984) allocation of total staff resources (field and campus based) in terms of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) positions by Extension program area. As one would expect, the contacts:FTE ratio is high in the Home Economics/Family Living and the 4-H/Youth Development program areas, in large part because of the greater frequency of meetings of organized groups (homemaker and 4-H clubs) in these areas.



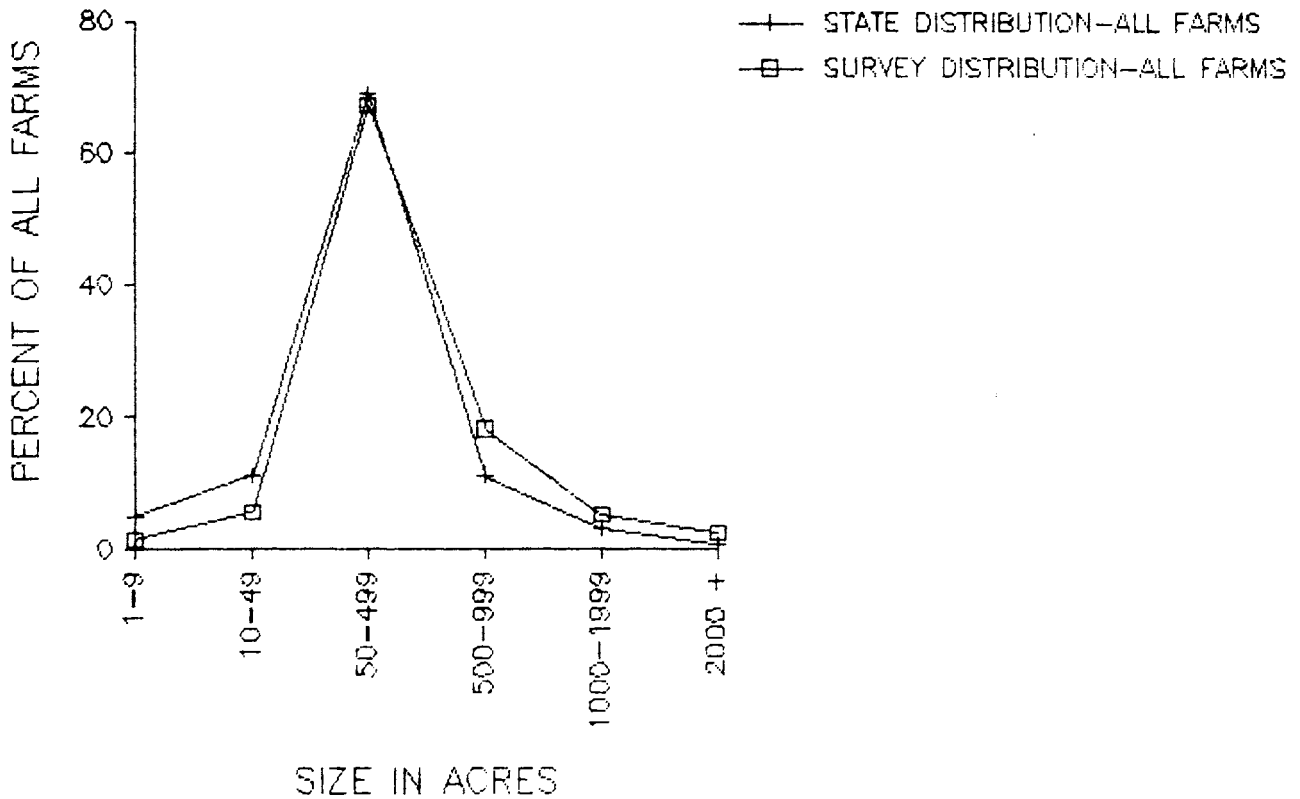
**--SURVEY COUNTIES--**  
 (Numbers = Quarter(s) of the survey year, Apr '83-Mar '84, in which the survey was administered.)

FIGURE 2: TOTAL CONTACTS BY QUARTER:



Total Annual Contacts = 2,033,840

FIGURE 3: STATE - SURVEY SAMPLE FARMS  
1982 Ag Census and 1983-84 Survey



**TABLE 2. CLIENTELE SURVEY - FARM SIZE DISTRIBUTION  
STATE DISTRIBUTION (1982 U.S. AG. CENSUS) vs. SURVEY DISTRIBUTION**

NUMBER OF FARMS IN SURVEY SAMPLE, 1983-84									
SIZE IN ACRES	NO. OF FARMS IN STATE-'82	HOBBY FARMS		FAMILY FARMS		CORPORATE FARMS		TOTAL FARMS	
		NUMBER	AVG SIZE IN ACRES	NUMBER	AVG SIZE IN ACRES	NUMBER	AVG SIZE IN ACRES	NUMBER	AVG SIZE
1 to 9	4546	15	4	2	8	0	0	17	4
10 to 49	10462	47	25	27	32	0	0	74	27
50 to 499	65160	41	125	825	258	23	254	889	252
500 to 999	10600	0	0	246	647	5	613	241	646
1000 to 1999	2933	0	0	62	1315	7	1457	69	1329
2000 or More	684	0	0	21	3065	10	3330	31	3150
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>94385</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>1183</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>1165</b>	<b>1321</b>	<b>432</b>

**TABLE 3. CLIENTELE SURVEY - FARM SIZE DISTRIBUTION BY PERCENT  
STATE DISTRIBUTION (1982 U.S. AG. CENSUS) vs. SURVEY DISTRIBUTION**

NUMBER OF FARMS IN SURVEY SAMPLE, 1983-84 AS A PERCENT OF TOTAL FARMS					
SIZE IN ACRES	FARMS IN STATE-'82 (PERCENT)	HOBBY FARMS	FAMILY FARMS	CORPORATE FARMS	TOTAL FARMS
1 to 9	4.82%	14.56%	.17%	.00%	1.29%
10 to 49	11.08%	45.63%	2.28%	.00%	5.60%
50 to 499	69.04%	39.81%	69.74%	51.11%	67.30%
500 to 999	11.23%	.00%	20.79%	11.11%	18.24%
1000 to 1999	3.11%	.00%	5.24%	15.56%	5.22%
2000 or More	.72%	.00%	1.78%	22.22%	2.35%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA



3 1951 D03 292831 I

Issued in furtherance of cooperative extension work in agriculture and home economics, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Patrick J. Borlich, Dean and Director of Agricultural Extension Service, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minnesota 55108. The University of Minnesota, including the Agricultural Extension Service, is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, religion, color, sex, national origin, handicap, age, or veteran status.