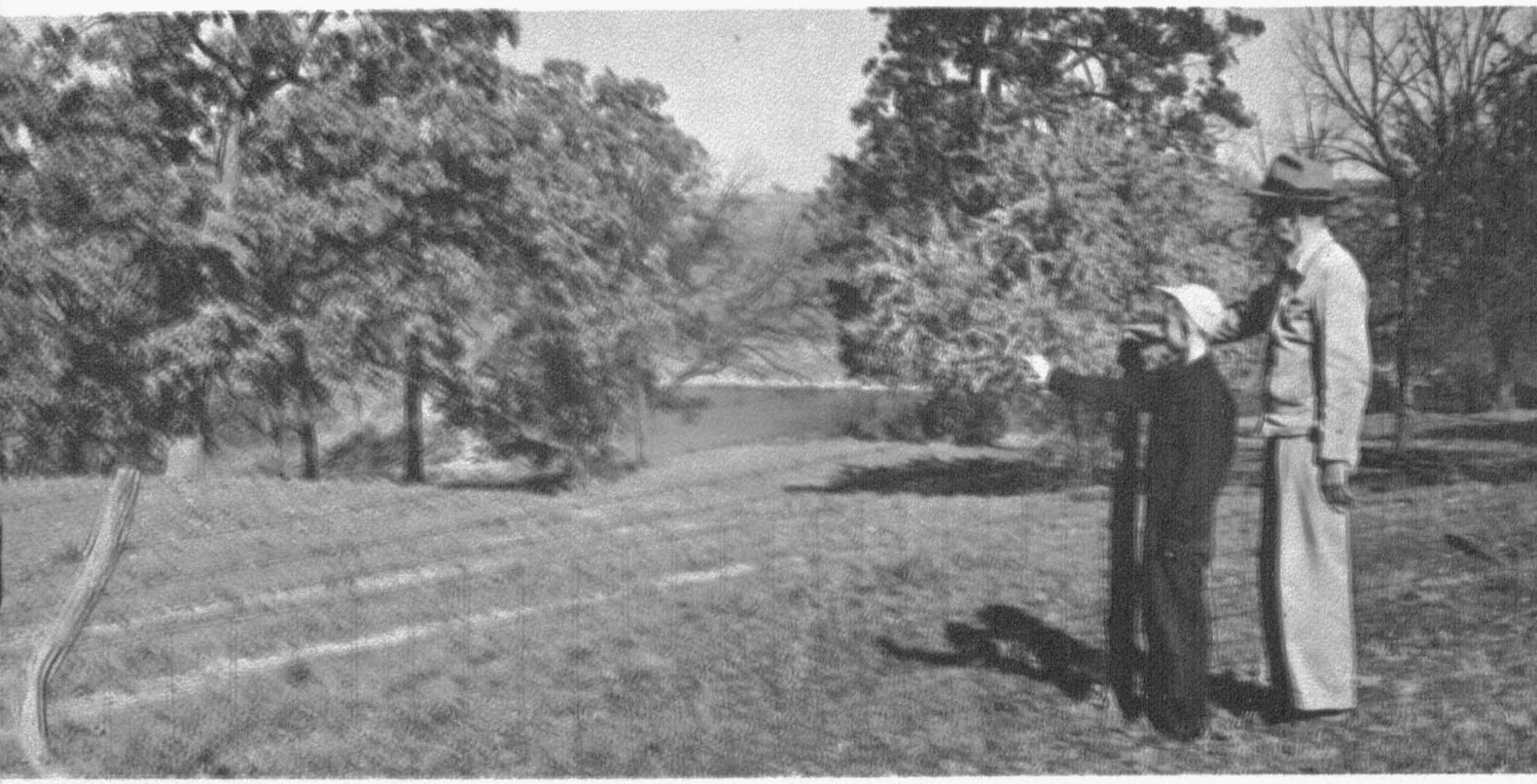
PARTICIPATION

IN GOVERNMENT LAND RETIREMENT PROGRAMS

IN MISSOURI



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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Areas of the nation and State complied at different rates with the two most recent government land retirement programs, the Conservation Reserve part of the Soil Bank and the 1961 Feed Grain Programs. This study was undertaken in an attempt to determine some of the more important reasons for different rates of farmer participation in the two programs in Greene and Saline Counties.

This study was designed and conducted in such a manner that the results apply to the two counties involved but not necessarily to farmers in general. Many more farmers living in differing areas would need to be included in a similar study before conclusions concerning farmers in general could be made.

This study was essentially divided into two parts. One part concerns the effect on rate of compliance with the two programs attributable to farmers' attitudes toward government policies and programs. The physical characteristics portion of the study is an attempt to measure the influence of types of farms, areas of the State, age groups, size and type of farm enterprises on the rate of compliance or non-compliance with the two programs.

General attitudes of farmers do not appear to be an important factor influencing rates of participation in land retirement programs. No statistically significant differences in attitudes were found between farmers who did and did not participate in the programs. Neither were there statistically significant relationships between rates of compliance with land retirement programs and farmers' attitudes toward such programs. However, there are some indications that compliance with a particular program may generate favorable attitudes toward the program. How well a particular program fits into the already existing type of farming and characteristics of the farmers of the area may well influence their attitude toward the program. Since attitudes toward land retirement programs have no great effect on rates of compliance, future programs could be designed to fit different areas and types of farming.

Characteristics of both farms and farmers do make a difference in rates of compliance with land retirement programs. Areas with differing characteristics such as topography, fertility of the soil, adaptability of crops, etc., had different rates of compliance with the land retirement programs. Physical characteristics of a particular area foster a particular type of farming and exert an influence on the size of the farm. Type of farming and size of the farm, in turn, exert an influence on the decision to participate or not to take part in a land retirement program. Not only do characteristics of the land and type of farming influence farmers' decisions to take part in programs, but the characteristics of the farmers themselves influence this decision. Farmers differ in abilities, resources, desires, and goals. In short, if farmers found it to their advantage, they complied with a land retirement program, if not, they did not comply.

Designing a single type of land retirement program that is equally advantageous to all farmers may be a near impossible task due to the differences in land, types of farming, and characteristics of farmers that vary from area to area. It is evident that more knowledge is needed about cause and effect relationships between area, type of farm enterprises, etc., and rates of compliance with land retirement programs before any general conclusions can be made about land retirement programs needed by American agriculture.

METHOD USED

The two areas studied, Greene and Saline Counties, represent widely differing situations in terms of: types of farm enterprises, soil types, population distribution, and topography as well as rates of compliance with the two programs under consideration.

Three separate lists of farmers were obtained from the ASC[1] Offices in both counties. All farmers who complied with the Feed Grain Program were on one list, and farmers who participated in the Conservation Reserve part of the Soil Bank Program were on a second list. The third list was made up of farmers who did not comply with either program. A probability sample of farmers was drawn from each list of farmers (names) in both counties by means of a table of random numbers. All farmers who were included in each list had the same opportunity to be included in the study.

All farmers selected to make up the sample were interviewed personally. No attempt was made to interview farmers in any special order or at any particular time of the day. Interviews were held as farmers could be contacted. All due cautions were heeded to protect the sample of farmers or answers they gave from any biases the interviewer may have had.

THE FARM PROBLEM AND LAND RETIREMENT PROGRAMS

Experiences of the 1950's would indicate that U.S. agriculture is capable of increasing production of food and fiber faster than demand is increased by population growth. As a result of this capacity for excess production, there are price depressing surpluses and American agriculture is caught in a cost price squeeze. The cost price squeeze has caused farmers' incomes, relative to the rest of the economy, to decline to levels that are deemed socially undesirable. This has led farmers, farm organizations, and government agencies to look for means of maintaining or improving the relative position of farm families' incomes. One method that has been used in an attempt to raise farm income is land retirement.

The two most recent land retirement programs that have been adopted are the Soil Bank and the Feed Grain Programs. The two programs are similar in that both have a goal of raising farm incomes by taking land out of production. Both programs are voluntary since the decision to comply or not to comply with the program is made by the individual farmer. However, there is some doubt that pressures on individual farmers to comply with the two programs are equal. There are advantages given to compliers with the Feed Grain Program, other than the actual rental payment, that are not available to non-compliers, such as eligibility for government price supports on grain produced.

Under the Conservation Reserve phase of the Soil Bank Program, farmers agreed to hold cropland out of production for a three, five, or ten year period while completing conservation practices for soil and water. Farmers are required to establish a cover crop or plant trees to protect the soil. The last contracts were signed in 1960 and some land will be under contract until 1969.

The Feed Grain Program was initiated in 1961 and was applicable to both corn and grain sorghum acreage. Barley and other sorghums were included in the program for 1962. Under the Feed Grain Program, farmers agreed to reduce their base acreage by a minimum of 20 percent any may divert up to a maximum of 40 percent. They are paid for 50 percent of the normal production on their farm for the first 20 percent reduction in acreage and 60 percent of normal production for the next 20 percent reduction in acreage. The Feed Grain Program is an annual program and neither the farmer nor the government is obligated for more than one year at a time.

STATE AND COUNTY PARTICIPATION

The rates of compliance with the Soil Bank Program and the Feed Grain Program varied between states. The variation followed regional lines rather than state lines. The maps on pages eight and nine show the effects of the programs in the various regions. There are several regions where neither of the programs were used extensively. The greatest use was made of the programs in the area running from north to south through the central part of the United States.

The Soil Bank Program was more popular in the Great Plains region and along the western edge of the corn belt than in the corn belt. The Feed Grain Program was more popular in the corn belt with some states in the Southwest being able to take advantage of sorghum bases. (Figures I and II).

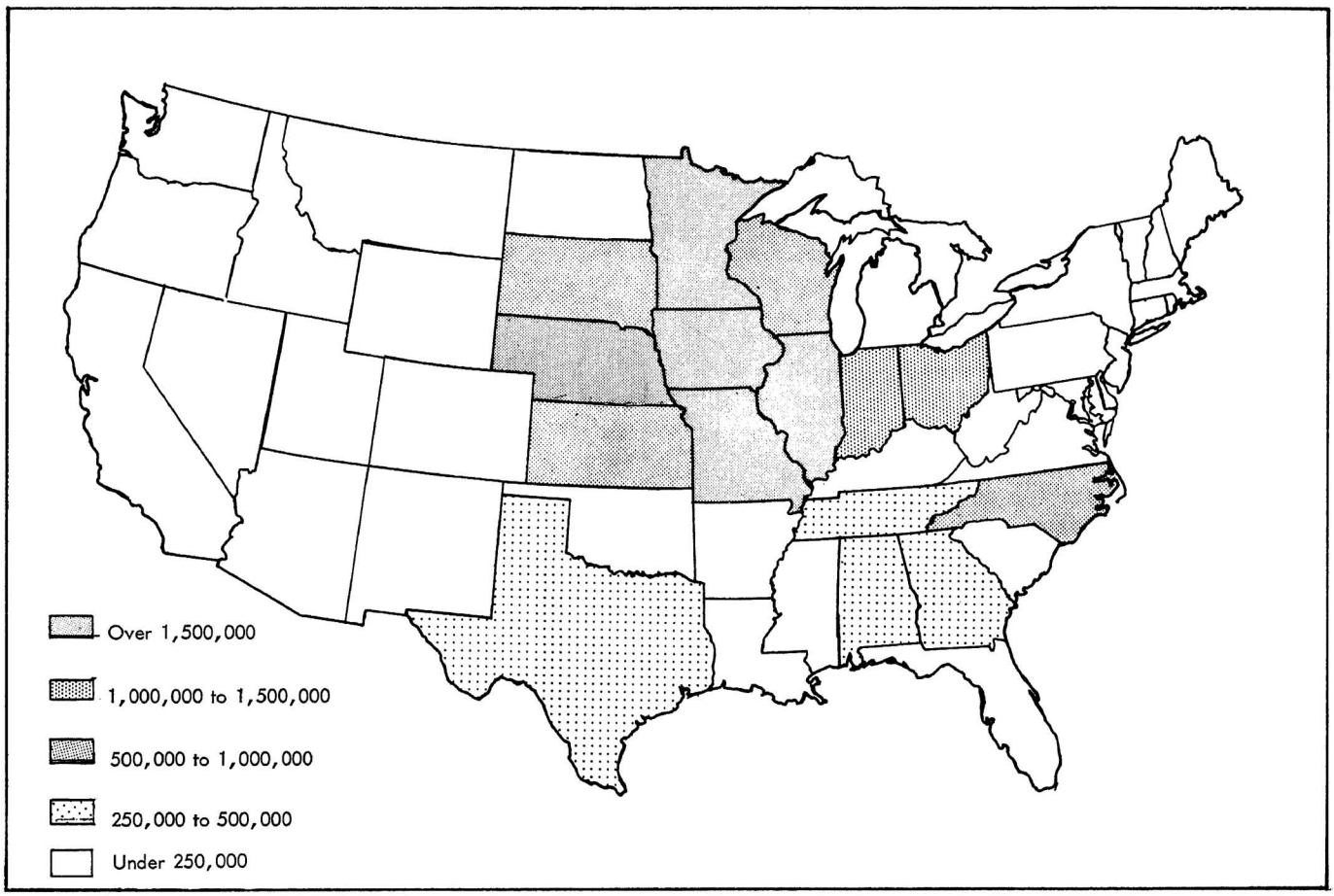
The State of Missouri is located in the area of the United States that complied with both of the land retirement programs. In Missouri, as in the nation, rates of compliance followed area or regional patterns rather than dividing along political boundaries.

Over Missouri, there are areas with natural conditions such that different types of farming have developed. The interaction between types of farm enterprises and different natural geographical conditions in turn led to

[1]Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation

FIGURE I

ACREAGE DIVERTED FROM CORN PRODUCTION BY STATE
UNDER THE 1961 FEED GRAIN PROGRAM



Source: Missouri Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Office.

different rates of compliance with the two most recent land retirement programs. Figures III and IV on pages 7 and 8 show the rates of compliance by counties.

The rate of compliance with the Conservation Reserve Program was highest in the western tier of counties south of Kansas City while the rate of compliance with the Feed Grain Program was highest in the counties along and north of the Missouri River. The Soil Bank Program apparently was more adaptable to areas oriented more toward the production of small grains than to areas of the state oriented to other types of production. Factors such as ratio of investment in machinery to investment in land, and areas that are on the margin for profitable production may play an important part in determining rates of compliance with the Conservation Reserve Program. Since the Feed Grain Program was intended as a means of diverting land from corn production, it is not surprising that it was adopted more extensively by the corn producing areas of the State.

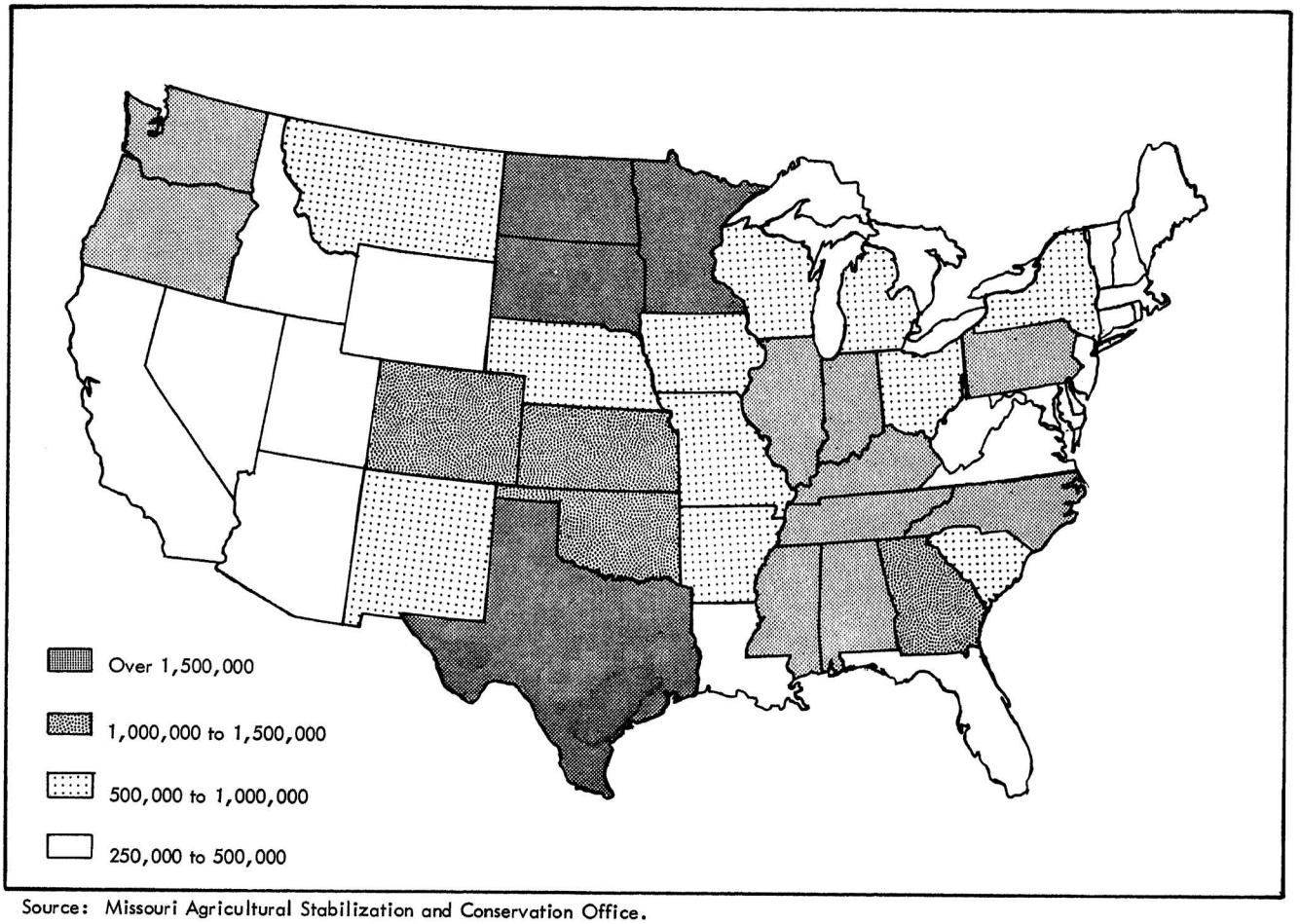
THE TWO COUNTIES

The two counties included in this study represent different areas of the State and dissimilar types of farming. The differences between the two counties are more noticeable in terms of: soil types, fertility, topography, and distribution of population. These differences in turn influence the type of farming and degree of specialization found in each county.

Greene County is located in the Ozarks with topography typical of that region. The farm land available can best be described as heterogeneous. The soil types and fertility of the soil vary from good to very poor and distribution is such that small plots of relatively good farming land are dispersed throughout the county.

The wide variations in soil types (primarily Clarksville and Lebanon) and fertility levels promote a diversified agriculture in the county as well as on particular farms within the county.

FIGURE II TOTAL ACREAGE IN THE CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM BY STATE: 1961.



Source: Missouri Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Office.

Agricultural specialization in Greene County is primarily dairying. Specialization in the dairy industry in Greene County tends to be limited to the final product. There is still much diversification in that most dairy farms produce a large number of inputs for the dairy enterprise. Adaptability of the land appears to be the important factor in determining the amount and number of locally produced inputs used in the specialized dairy enterprise.

Springfield, with a population of almost 100,000 people, is the county seat of Greene County. The urban influence exerted by Springfield can be observed throughout the rural area. However, no attempt was made to measure the urban influence in this study.

Saline County is located in west central Missouri along the Missouri River. Saline County contains some of the most fertile farm land in the state and nation. The soil is relatively homogeneous, (Wabash and Marshall predominate) with relatively constant fertility levels over fairly wide areas. A diversified agriculture has been, and still is, practiced in Saline County; but the trend is toward more specialization. Geography of the county makes specialization possible not only in livestock production but also for intermediate products, primarily corn.

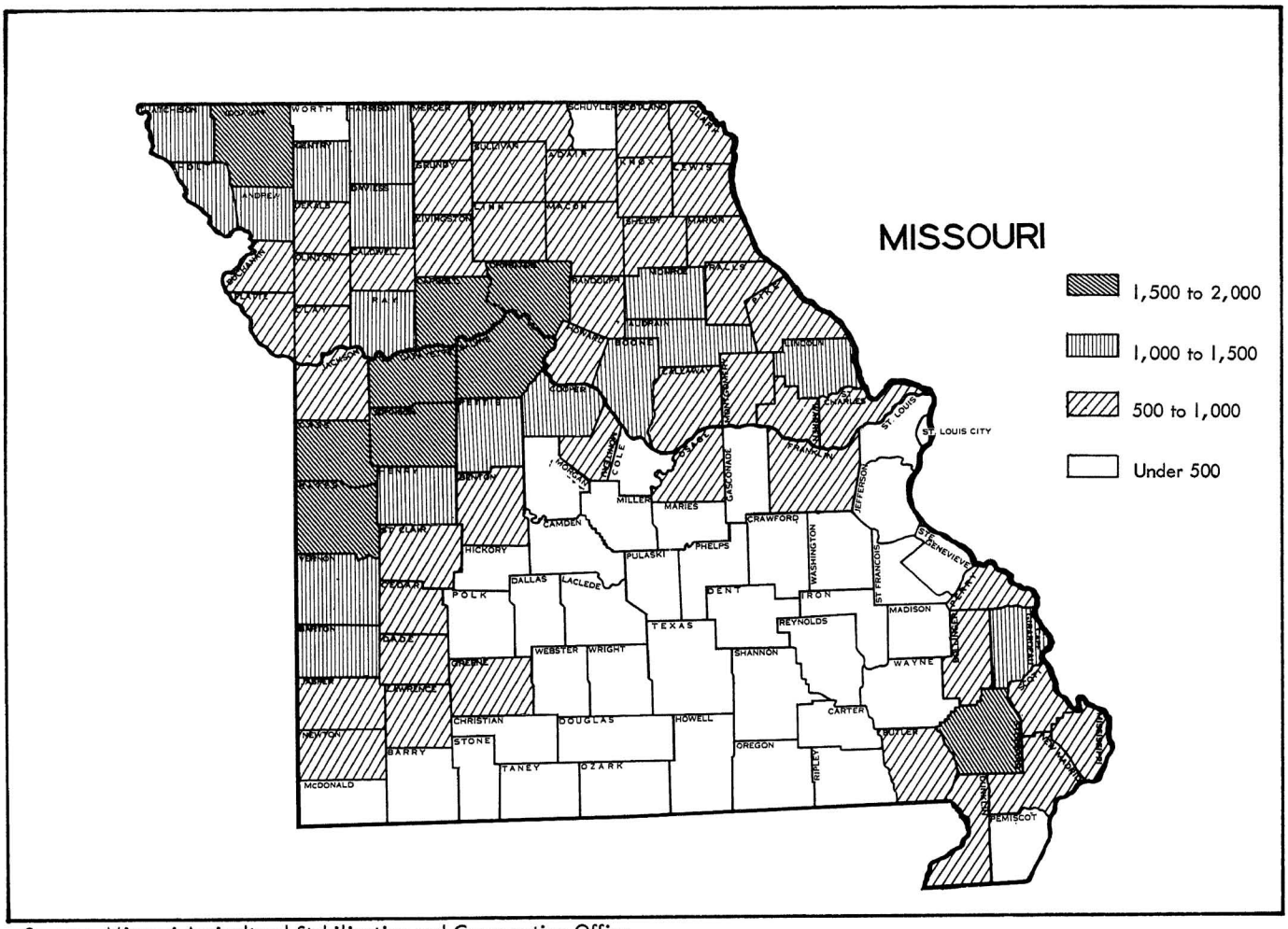
Saline County is classified as a rural county located far enough from a large city so there is no observed urban influence. The largest city in Saline County is Marshall, the county seat, with a population of approximately 10,000 people. (Tables I-IV).

One of the major considerations in selecting the two counties for this study was the different rates of compliance with the Feed Grain and Soil Bank Programs.

Saline County had more compliers (1,965) with the Feed Grain Program than any county in the State. Greene County only had 533 who complied with the Feed Grain Program. Greene County was the third highest county in the State in compliance with the Soil Bank Program while Saline County was near the average for the State.

There is another factor that may or may not contribute significantly to differences between the counties. Attitudes toward and methods of administering the sign up of the Feed Grain Program by the two ASC Offices were different. The major observed difference was in the

FIGURE III NUMBER OF FARMERS IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE 1961 FEED GRAIN PROGRAM BY COUNTY



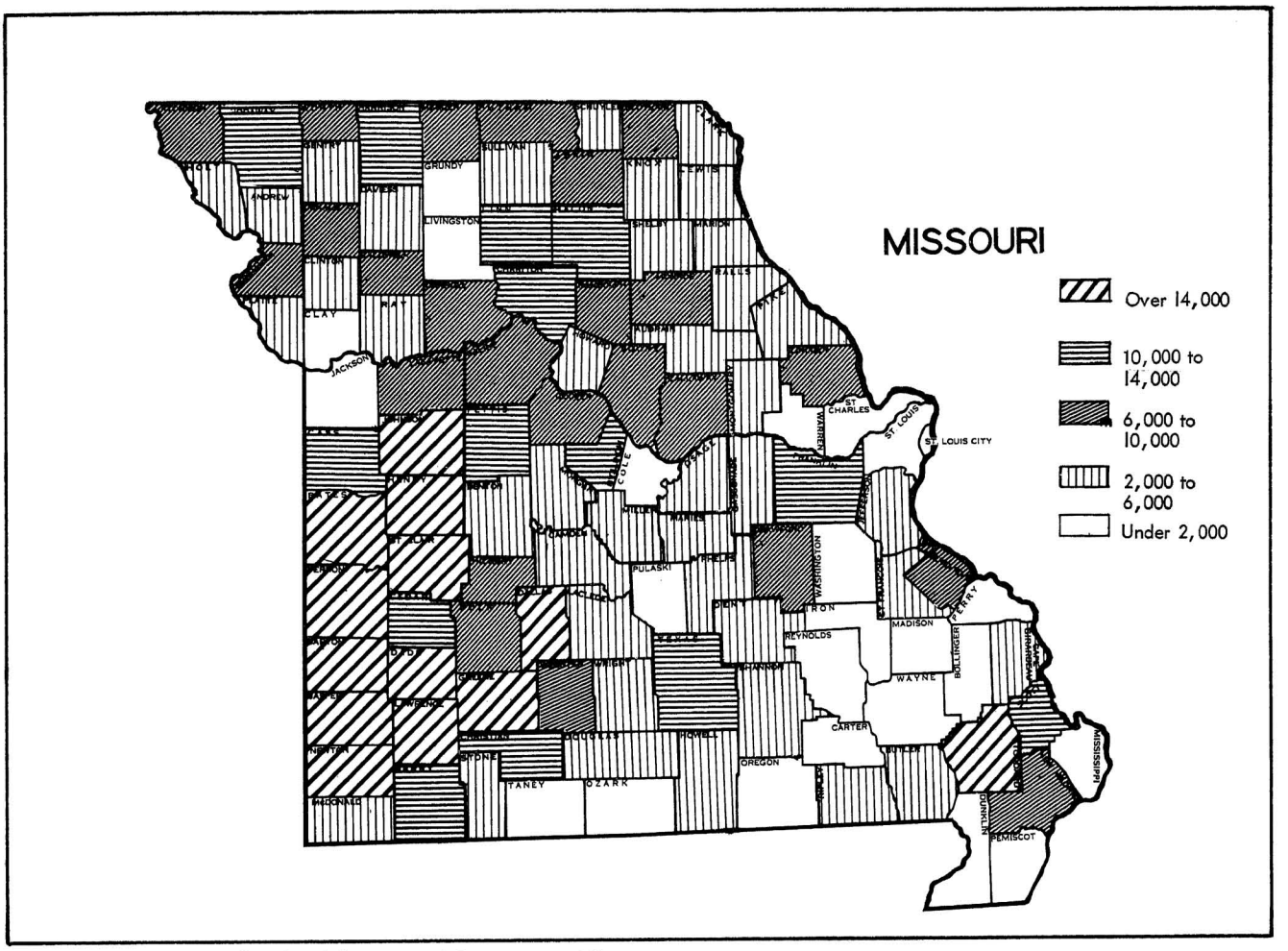
Source: Missouri Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Office.

TABLE I - LIVESTOCK AND LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION AND SALES IN GREENE AND SALINE COUNTIES, MISSOURI, 1959.

	Greene County	Saline County
Number of Cattle and Calves on Farms	55,660	$ 66,274
Number of Milk Cows on Farms	18,108	$ 2,910
Total Dollars of Livestock and Dairy Production Sold	$10,062,812	$13,849,202
Total Dollars of Cattle Sold	$ 3,827,006	$ 8,196,908
Total Dollars of Hogs Sold	$ 2,640,090	$ 4,696,800
Total Dollars of Milk and Cream Sold	$ 4,457,705	$ 329,460
Average Dollars of Milk Sold Per Farm That Sells Milk	$ 3,155	$ 1,313

Source: Missouri Agricultural Census.

FIGURE IV NUMBER OF ACRES IN THE CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM BY COUNTIES: 1961.



Source: Missouri Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Office.

TABLE II - CROPLAND USE PATTERNS IN RELATION TO TOTAL ACRES AND ACRES OF LAND IN FARMS IN GREENE AND SALINE COUNTIES, MISSOURI, 1959.

	Greene County	Saline County
Total Acres in County	433,280	485,760
Total Acres in the County in Farms	239,573	434,029
Per Cent of Total Acres in the County in Farms	55%	89%
Acres of Oats Harvested	8,067	12,956
Acres of Wheat Harvested	7,169	34,588
Acres of Corn Harvested	11,411	115,976
Acres of Milo Harvested	5,643	16,528
Acres of Barley Harvested	3,619	2,469
Total Acres of Harvested Crops	73,662	232,412
Per Cent of Farms in Harvested Acres	31%	54%

Source: Missouri Agricultural Census.

TABLE III - AVERAGE SIZE OF FARMS AND THE INVESTMENT IN FARMS IN GREENT AND SALINE COUNTIES, MISSOURI, 1959

	Greene County	Saline County
Average Size of Farms in Acres	180.80	302.00
Average Value Per Acre in Dollars	$ 173.34	$ 188.02
Average Value Per Farm of Buildings and Land	$29,581.00	$56,943.00

Source: Missouri Agricultural Census.

TABLE IV - LAND TENURE AND OFF FARM EMPLOYMENT PATTERNS IN GREENE AND SALINE COUNTIES, MISSOURI, 1959

	Greene County	Saline County
Number of Farms	1,325	1,437
Number of Full Owners	889	593
Number of Part Owners	310	499
Number of Managers	10	---
Number of Tenants	110	345
Number with 100 Days Off Farm Employment	331	161
Number with Non-farm Income Exceeding Farm Income	351	113

Source: Missouri Agricultural Census.

attitude of the ASC Offices toward the Feed Grain Program. The County Committee and office staff in Saline County appeared to be highly enthusiastic about the Feed Grain Program and attempted to sell farmers on the merits of complying with the Feed Grain Program. The Greene County Committee and office staff were very cooperative in helping farmers who desired to participate in the Feed Grain Program. However, they did not generally urge participation in the program. No attempt was made in this study to measure the effect of the difference in attitudes and enthusiasm of personnel of the two ASC Offices.

ATTITUDE STUDY

Attitudes often influence decisions of people. For many years, those concerned with policies relating to agriculture have considered farmers' attitudes toward government land retirement programs to exert a strong influence on the rate of compliance with the various programs. Two counties and three groups within each county were studied to determine if attitudes did influence the rate of compliance with the Soil Bank and Feed Grain Programs.

This study is not intended to account for all factors contributing to farmers' attitudes toward the two programs nor are the results of the study directly applicable to all farmers of the nation. Results of the study are presented with these limitations in mind.

Farmers' attitudes ranged between two extremes. Some expressed a desire for government to get completely out of agriculture while others favored strict supply control by the government. However, most of the farmers interviewed had attitudes toward land retirement programs that could be placed somewhere between the two extremes stated above.

Attitudes were reflected by: membership in farm organizations, agreement with policies of farm organizations, preference for farm programs as presented in the platforms of the two political parties, indication of a national farm leader who most nearly expresses their views, opinion as to the most important farm problem, opinions about the general price level for farm products in the next ten years and the number of people needed in agriculture in the next ten years, strictness of the government in alloting base acreages, and approval of a government sponsored land retirement program. None of the above factors were significantly related to compliance with either the Feed Grain or Soil Bank Programs. This means that by any measure of attitudes used in this study, there was no relationship between attitudes toward the programs and the rate of compliance with the programs. However, farmers tended to approve of the program they complied with. This would indicate that familiarity and compliance with land retirement program encourages approval. As farmers become familiar with, understand the program, and are able to fit the program into their particular operation, they tend to express their approval of the program. Most farmers who did not comply with either the Feed Grain Program or the Conservation Reserve Program, expressed approval of land retirement programs in principle, and were about evenly divided as to which of the two programs they preferred as a means of retiring land.

There was a slight difference in rates of approval of the two programs between the counties but not a significant difference.

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Size of farm, crop production, livestock sales, investment in land and machinery, and characteristics of the

operator are factors influencing the rate of participation in both the Soil Bank and Feed Grain Programs. It should be noted that these factors exerted a different amount of influence in the two counties. For instance, size of farm was quite important to the rate of compliance with the Feed Grain Program in Greene County but of lesser importance in Saline County. The table on page 21 shows how the programs were related to the different variables. (Table V)

TABLE V - AVERAGE FARM SIZE IN ACRES BY COMPLIANCE WITH LAND RETIREMENT PROGRAMS IN GREENE AND SALINE COUNTIES, MISSOURI, 1961.

	Acres Owned (Those Who Rent Land)	
	Greene County Average/Farm	Saline County Average/Farm
Feed Grain	337.00	224.80
Conservation Reserve	180.75	387.00
Non-complier	95.25	125.00
	Acres Rented (Those Who Rent Land)	
	Greene County Average/Farm	Saline County Average/Farm
Feed Grain	181.50	431.00
Conservation Reserve	188.60	90.00
Non-complier	90.00	259.00

Source: Data from personal interviews with 122 farmers in Greene and Saline Counties.

Farmers who complied with the Feed Grain Program in Greene County tended to be larger commercial farmers. They had more total acres per farm and had more investment in both land and machinery. (Table VI) They were well above the county average in sale of all livestock and number of acres of all crops harvested. (Table VII) The tendency was for this group to be expanding their total farm operation rather than contracting or continuing with a constant size farm operation. (Table VIII) Of course, there were individual exceptions to the above characteristics, but exceptions were rare.

Greene County does not have a history of being a grain producing area; consequently, many farms did not have a base acreage large enough to make participation in the Feed Grain Program attracive. The larger farms in the county apparently were the only ones with sufficient base acreage to make necessary adjustments in the farm enterprise profitable. (Table IX)

Those who complied with the Soil Bank Program in Greene County are much harder to describe than the farmers who complied with the Feed Grain Program. The Soil Bank Program was used by almost all types of farm operations in the county. No one type or kind of farming was predominant in use of the program. The program was used by different size and types of enterprises for different reasons. Apparently farmers complied with the Soil Bank Program if they found it profitable to do so in view of their individual goals.

As would be expected, the Soil Bank Program was used extensively as a means of retiring both land and farmers. (Table X) Several small to middle size farmers viewed the program as a means of retirement, but this was not so in the case of larger farm operators. The larger farmers used the Soil Bank Program as a means of changing to a more extensive farm enterprise. This change in intensity is evidenced by the amount of land rented. The larger farmers tended to place their crop acres in the Soil Bank Program and rent additional pasture. Younger farmers who had acquired something less than a full time paying enterprise also tended to participate in the Soil Bank Program. Those in this category frequently had off farm employment. (Table XI)

The non-compliers in Greene County were not large commercial farmers. They tended to be small farmers who operated their farms as a side line. Only three of the non-compliers received the major share of their income from farming. These three operated dairy farms in the suburbs of Springfield and found it to their advantage not to comply with the program. Several of the smaller farmers were using their farms as a rural residence. In Greene County the non-compliers did not comply primarily because they did not have enough cropland to pay them to comply.

By way of contrast, practically all the farmers in Saline County complied with the Feed Grain Program. The exceptions were those who already had their eligible land in the Soil Bank Program, had no eligible land, or smaller operators who had to utilize their land to the fullest extent in order to employ their labor and machinery. The Feed Grain Program was apparently well adapted to the type of farm enterprises that predominate in Saline County.

Farmers who complied with the Soil Bank Program in Saline County had fewer types of farming operations than those who complied with the Feed Grain Program. There was more variation in type of farming enterprise among those who complied with the Soil Bank Program in Greene County than in Saline County. Even in Saline County, where enterprises are more intensive, the Soil Bank Program was used as a means of retirement by some of the smaller farmers. A few who wanted to retain ownership of relatively small units made use of the Soil Bank Program to pay the cost of retaining ownership such as taxes and insurance. However, more income usually could be obtained by renting to another farmer than by participating in the Soil Bank Program.

TABLE VI - AVERAGE FARM INVESTMENT BY COMPLIANCE WITH LAND RETIREMENT PROGRAMS IN GREENE AND SALINE COUNTIES, MISSOURI, 1961.

	Investment in Machinery[1]	
	Greene County Average Investment Per Farm	Saline County Average Investment Per Farm
Feed Grain	12,938	11,624
Conservation Reserve	4,307	15,343
Non-complier	4,141	5,307

	Investment in Land and Buildings[1]			
	Greene County Average Investment Per Farm--Per Acre[2]		Saline County Average Investment Per Farm--Per Acre[2]	
Feed Grain	69,625	206	35,286	207
Conservation Reserve	30,815	170	69,452	179
Non-complier	19,535	205	10,538	122

[1]These are average investment figures for all the farmers interviewed even though some of the operators did not report investments of this type.

[2]Total investment in land and buildings divided by total number of acres owned by all operators interviewed.

Source: Data from personal interviews with 122 farmers in Greene and Saline Counties.

TABLE VII - LIVESTOCK AND LIVESTOCK PRODUCT SALES BY COMPLIANCE WITH LAND RETIREMENT PROGRAMS IN GREENE AND SALINE COUNTIES, MISSOURI, 1961.

	Beef	
	Greene County Average Sales/Farm	Saline County Average Sales/Farm
Feed Grain	5,845	6,269
Conservation Reserve	1,265	3,356
Non-complier	1,030	4,808

	Dairy Products	
	Greene County Average Sales/Farm	Saline County Average Sales/Farm
Feed Grain	7,446	206
Conservation Reserve	3,990	0
Non-complier	3,675	462

	Pork	
	Greene County Average Sales/Farm	Saline County Average Sales/Farm
Feed Grain	2,375	9,469
Conservation Reserve	1,535	5,562
Non-complier	600	1,808

Source: Data obtained from personal interviews with 122 farmers in Greene and Saline Counties.

TABLE VIII - NUMBER OF FARMERS WHO HAVE SHOWN A TENDENCY TO CHANGE THE SIZE OF THE FARM OPERATION IN PAST YEARS IN GREENE AND SALINE COUNTIES, MISSOURI, 1961.

	Greene County		
	Increased	Decreased	No Change
Feed Grain	10	8	5
Conservation Reserve	5	14	1
Non-complier	3	9	8
Total	18	31	14

	Saline County		
	Increased	Decreased	No Change
Feed Grain	14	9	6
Conservation Reserve	6	8	2
Non-complier	3	2	8
Total	23	19	16

Source: Data from personal interviews with 122 farmers in Greene and Saline Counties.

TABLE IX - AVERAGE ACRES IN CROPLAND AND CORN PRODUCTION BY COMPLIANCE WITH LAND RETIREMENT PROGRAMS IN GREENE AND SALINE COUNTIES, MISSOURI, 1961.

Acres in Cropland

	Greene County		Saline County	
	Average Per Farm	Per Cent of Total	Average Per Farm	Per Cent of Total
FG[1/]	138	37	358	77
CR[2/]	65	30	254	67
NC[3/]	40	39	91	55

Acres in Corn Production

	Greene County		Saline County	
	Average Per Farm	Per Cent of Total	Average Per Farm	Per Cent of Total
FG[1/]	16	12	122	57
CR[2/]	6	10	44	70
NC[3/]	9	24	35	63

[1/] Feed Grain

[2/] Conservation Reserve

[3/] Non-complier

Source: Data obtained from personal interviews with 122 farmers in Greene and Saline Counties.

TABLE X - AGE OF FARMERS IN GREENE AND SALINE COUNTIES BY COMPLIANCE WITH LAND RETIREMENT PROGRAMS IN GREENE AND SALINE COUNTIES, MISSOURI, 1961.

	Age of Farmer	
	Greene County	Saline County
Feed Grain	55.08	46.90
Conservation Reserve	55.85	55.90
Non-complier	49.10	55.85

Source: Data obtained from personal interviews with 122 farmers in Greene and Saline Counties.

TABLE XI - OFF FARM EMPLOYMENT IN COUNTIES BY COMPLIANCE WITH LAND RETIREMENT PROGRAMS IN GREENE AND SALINE COUNTIES, MISSOURI, 1961.

	Off Farm Employment			
	Greene County Yes 26, No 38		Saline County Yes 12, No 46	
Feed Grain	3	21	5	24
Conservation Reserve	10	10	3	13
Non-complier	13	7	4	9

Source: Data obtained from personal interviews with 122 farmers in Greene and Saline Counties.

Apparently some of the larger farmers in Saline County used the Soil Bank Program as a means of profitably holding land without increasing the size of their farm operation. Evidently, they could still employ their labor and machinery profitably even after a reduction in usable acres. They had more land than they needed to employ their labor and machinery. The most noticeable characteristic of the Soil Bank Program in Saline County was the absence of the medium size operations. Apparently, the program did not lend itself to this size and type farm operation.

The non-compliers in Saline County as well as in Greene County were not the commercial farmers. As a group, the non-compliers were far overshadowed by those who complied in almost every measure of size. There were a few farmers in this group who needed all of their land to utilize their labor and machinery. Otherwise, this group could hardly be called commercial farmers. They were land owners who ran a few head of livestock more or less for their pleasure, or else rented land to their neighbors.

The differences between the types of farm enterprises and farmers who complied with the two programs in the two counties are quite striking. In Greene County the Soil Bank Program adapted itself to most types of farms and farmers. Certainly not all farmers complied with it, but most types of farm operations were well represented. The Feed Grain Program was used extensively by the larger commercial farmers in Greene County and only occasionally by smaller farmers. The exact opposite was true in Saline County. Almost all types of farm operations were able to take advantage of the Feed Grain Program while the Soil Bank Program was only used by particular types of farms. The group that did not comply with either of the programs was similar in many respects in both counties. They were the smaller farmers who frequently were using the farm as a place to live and obtaining their livelihood elsewhere. With a few exceptions in both counties, this group depended on other sources for a major portion of their income.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Farmers

The land retirement programs considered in this study were voluntary in terms of farmer compliance. This voluntary feature makes it especially important that farmers consider how the program fits into their individual farm operation. The two programs studied were best adapted to different areas and different types of farming. The Conservation Reserve Program seemed to be best adapted to areas of extensive farm enterprises and areas with narrower profit margins per acre. Feed Grain Program compliance seemed to be primarily determined by base acreage. Attitudes toward land retirement programs were of no apparent importance in determining compliance.

Farm Organizations

Land retirement programs have different effects on individual members, on the agriculture in different areas, and on total membership in farm organizations. A program such as the Conservation Reserve Program may be particularly beneficial to members in some areas, but if whole units are retired, the farm organization membership in the area may decline. A Feed Grain type program in all likelihood will not affect membership, but it may not be of value to members who do not have sufficient base acreages.

Neither of the two programs studied will fit all goals of farm organizations. This can be true for state and local organizations as well as for national farm organizations. When considering land retirement programs of the two types studied, farm organizations will have to make value judgments as to what are the most important objectives for the organization to pursue.

Farm Suppliers

A Conservation Reserve type program, where widely

adopted, may reduce the sale of farm supplies. In areas where it is not adaptable the influence may hardly be felt. If a sizeable number of whole farms are taken out of production, all types of suppliers will realize lower sales volume. A Feed Grain type of program, where only parts of the farm units are retired, will affect only certain types of farm suppliers. For instance, it might actually help fertilizer dealers while being detrimental to machinery dealers.

Farm Produce Handlers

Here again, the two types of land retirement programs will have different effects. Both programs will reduce total farm production; but there can be a vast difference, both between areas and types of production. The Conservation Reserve type of program will tend to result in an across the board reduction of all types of production while a program involving only feed grains will be much less general in its effect. The effect of the program then will vary greatly depending on the type of business. The relevant question is, how much it will cut the production of products handled by the firm. The more adaptable the program is to a market area the more it will reduce local production and the volume of business of firms handling the product.

Policy Makers

Attitudes were not demonstrated as being important in determining rates of compliance with land retirement programs in Missouri. Physical characteristics were important. Apparently rates of compliance are affected by area geographical characteristics, types of farm enterprises, individual farmer characteristics, importance of the profit motive, management decisions, and goals of individual farm operators. The interaction of the above factors is quite complex and this study gives no indication of this interaction. It does point out its existence and suggests more detailed research into these relationships.

This study, along with others which have been conducted throughout the United States, indicates the various factors influencing participation in voluntary land retirement programs. It becomes apparent that a specific program will affect particular areas differently. This seems to indicate that careful evaluation of such programs is needed in order to determine the desirability of such a program and the effects likely to be forthcoming.