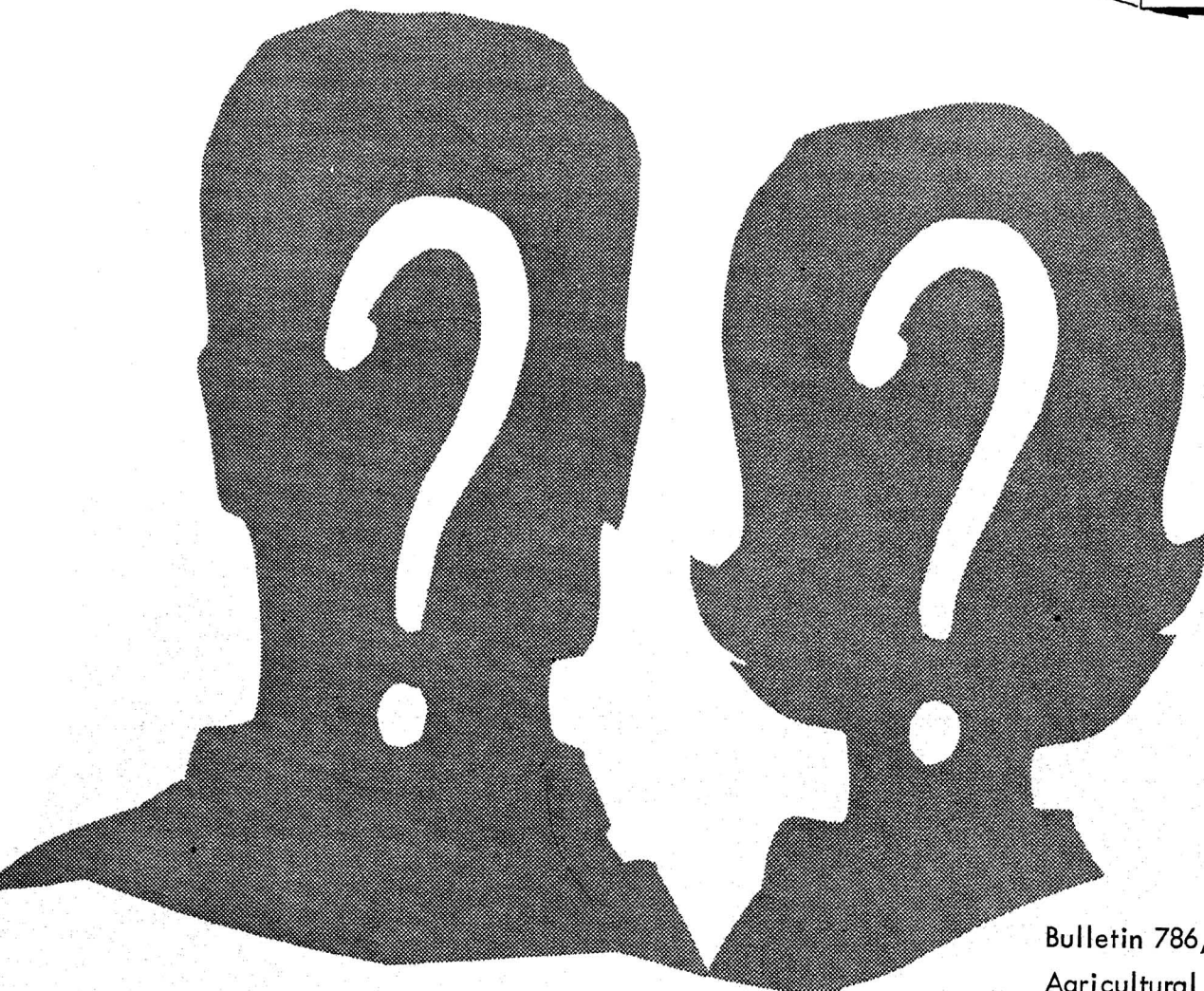


THE "JOINERS"

...What Are They Like?



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University of Missouri

THE "JOINERS"

...What Are They Like?

Some people join many organizations; others join few or none. And among the joiners, some go in for one type of organization and others another; for example, a lodge versus a community service club.

Do these people have different characteristics that might separate the "joiners" from the "non-joiners?" And do those who choose a particular type of organization have characteristics different from those of the others?

Information that would help supply answers to these questions was available from a previous study. It had been gathered while trying to determine the characteristics of farmers in two communities who used various communication media as their sources of knowledge about new farm practices. (This aspect of the study was reported in Experiment Station Bulletin 771: *Your Audience . . . What's it Like?*) One community in the study was in the prosperous farming area of northwest Missouri. For the purpose of identification this community was called "Prairie." The other community was in the poorer farming area of the Missouri Ozarks and this community was called "Ozark."

It should be emphasized that this is *not* a study of the entire membership of any one organization or groups of organizations. Rather it is a study of *all* the farm operators in two communities who said they belonged to organizations.

Organizations to which farm operators in the study belonged were divided and grouped on the basis of the major functions which they performed. Some organizations, such as the Farm Bureau and Missouri Farmers Association, have many functions in a community. They may, for example, perform social, informational, and farm economic services within a single community. However, since the major purpose of these particular organizations is the performance of farm economic services, they were placed in the 'farm service' grouping. The author realizes

that the groupings are somewhat arbitrary, both because of the overlapping of functions and because the functions actually performed by an organization may differ from the functions stated by the organization.

Grouped below are the organizations to which farm operators in the two communities belonged. The organizations are listed in the grouping that seems to describe them best.

Social Organizations:

- Rod & Gun Club
- Masonic Lodge
- Veterans of Foreign Wars
- American Legion
- All other lodges & friendship clubs

Farm Informational Organizations:

- Adult Vocational Agriculture Classes
- Soil Conservation Service
- Balanced Farming

Farm Service Organizations:

- Farm Bureau
- Missouri Farmers Association (M.F.A.)
- Other Cooperatives
- Milk Marketing Organizations
- Other local organizations with economic services

Commodity Marketing Control Organizations:

- National Farmers Organization (N.F.O.)

Church Organizations:

- All churches and their organizations within the two areas studied

Advisory Organizations:

- School Board
- Road Board
- Parent-Teacher Association
- Extension Council

*This is part of an overall study of the diffusion of information carried out under the direction of Herbert F. Lionberger. Judy Baker, student assistant, contributed to the writing of this bulletin.

**"Joiners" as used in this bulletin are persons who said they belonged to an organization. This membership might be in only one or in many organizations.

**A Study of Members and
Non-Members of Organizations in
Two Rural Missouri Communities**

REX CAMPBELL
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Other agricultural agency councils
Community Hospital Board
Missouri Good Roads
Association

Altogether, 238 farmers in Ozark and 219 farmers in Prairie were interviewed. Only farmers who actually lived on farms (rather than in town) and earned a significant part of their income from the farm were interviewed. During the personal interview, detailed questions were asked about various social, personal, and economic characteristics. To gather information about the joiner, for example, the interviewers asked each farmer what organizations he belonged to. Then they asked further questions about his attendance, committee membership, and offices held in the organizations.

It was possible for a farmer to be included in more than one grouping, if he stated that he had membership in organizations included under different groups. The percentages of farmers who belonged to organizations under the different groupings are shown in the Table.

**PERCENTAGES OF FARM OPERATORS IN VARIOUS
GROUPS OF ORGANIZATIONS**

ORGANIZATION GROUPING	Percent of Farm Operators Who Were Members*	
	PRAIRIE	OZARK
Social	30.6	11.8
Farm Informational	26.5	6.7
Farm Service	24.2	96.6
Commodity Marketing Control	21.9	3.8
Advisory	14.6	21.4
Church	83.0	74.4

*An operator might have membership in one, two, or more of the groups. Thus the percentages add to more than 100%.

The next step in the study was to compare the joiners of specific organizational groupings (called "Ins") with the non-joiners of that category (called "Outs"). To accomplish this, characteristics were chosen which, when compared, would give a picture of a joiner or of a

non-joiner. The characteristics reflect answers to questions asked in other sections of the interviews. They included:

1. Prestige rating. (*This rating was a score given to each farmer by a panel of local judges. The prestige rating worked differently from most: the lower the score, the higher the prestige of the farmer. This fact should be remembered when the figures in various tables are presented.*)
2. Age.
3. Last grade completed. (Formal education only.)
4. Number of acres operated.
5. Years residence in the community.
6. Total gross farm income.
7. Level of living score. (*This score was based on the number of home features which the farm possessed—features such as a telephone, automobile, type of cooking stove, refrigerator, and other modern appliances.*)
8. Total social participation score. (*This was a score including membership and participation in churches, organizations, cliques, and neighborhoods.*)
9. Information receptivity. (*This was a rating by the interviewer of how receptive to new farming information the farmer was.*)
10. Improved practice rating. (*Of all the improved farm practices applicable to his farm, this is the proportion which the farmer had actually adopted.*)
11. Number of times mentioned as a source of farming information. (*A score based upon the number of times a farmer was mentioned by his associates as a source of farm information.*)
12. Number of times mentioned as an innovator. (*A score based upon the number of times a farmer was mentioned by his associates as being one of the first to try specific new farming practices.*)

Comparison of members ("Ins") of organizational groups with non-members ("Outs") by their scores on the characteristics just listed resulted in a mass of figures. To help the comparison, the median was calculated for each characteristic. The median is a special kind of statistical average used when dealing with scores and ratings like the ones in this study.

Each set of 12 medians for the 12 characteristics formed a personality. Each of these personalities was given a fictitious name to further facilitate comparison. Thus, each organizational grouping possessed four hypothetical men; a "joiner" and a "non-joiner" from both communities, each with his own set of 12 median, or average, characteristics scores.

Through descriptions of the men under each grouping and comparison of them, an attempt was made to answer the questions: Who joined? What were they like? Were joiners different from non-joiners? Were joiners in one type of organizational grouping different from those in another? Were joiners in the same grouping different in different communities? An attempt was made to allow broad pictures of personalities to emerge.



THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

**Masons
Veterans of Foreign Wars
American Legion
Rod and Gun Club
All Other Lodges and
Friendship Groups**

These four fictitious men typify the different personalities in this social grouping: (1) Paul In, a member of one of the social groups in Prairie; (2) Patrick Out, who also lived in Prairie, but did not belong to a social group; (3) Oscar In, member of a social group in Ozark; and (4) Owen Out, an Ozark resident who did not belong to a social group. First names beginning with P were used to designate the Prairie community men and names beginning with O, the Ozark men.

The men are described thoroughly through the tables, medians, and comparisons. Paul In and Oscar In, the joiners, had much in common; they were younger, were well educated, and had high prestige ratings. They both had large farms, made above average income from them, and enjoyed a high level of living as well. Their farms were up to date, as was shown by their improved practice rating. Their information receptivity and social participation scores were also high.

Paul In was mentioned by his neighbors as a source of farm information, and was named as an innovator, but Oscar In was not often mentioned. Being a member of a social group should certainly at least have presented the opportunity to exchange farm information and ideas in casual conversation. However, Paul In had been living in his community longer than had Oscar In; this factor may have been one of the influences governing how many people sought his advice.

Patrick Out and Owen Out also had much in common. They both were older, had lower prestige, and less

education. Their level of living was also lower. Their improved practice ratings were low; which could have meant that they were not getting the full use out of their farms. Their social participation scores and information receptivity were also low.

Patrick Out was not often mentioned as a source of farm information or as an innovator. The fact that Patrick had not spent many years in the community again may have been a factor. Owen Out, on the other hand, was named often as a source of farm information and as an innovator. The fact that he had lived a long time in the community would help to point out why Owen's advice was sought and valued.

In some instances the difference between the median scores of the Ins and Outs was quite large and in others small. Considering the larger differences in both communities, the Outs were older than the Ins by an average (an average of the differences in both communities) of 7.9 years, with the greatest age difference existing in Prairie. The Ins' educational level was an average 2.16 years greater than that of the Outs; their total social participation score averaged 5.73 higher; and their improved practice ratings were also higher by an average of 12.3. In Prairie, the Ins had lived 0.3 year longer in the community than the Outs. This was not much difference but in Ozark where a reverse situation prevailed, the Outs had lived in the community 10.5 years longer than the Ins.



THE FARM INFORMATION ORGANIZATIONS

**Adult Vocational
Agriculture Classes
Soil Conservation Services
Balanced Farming**

Typical members of this grouping were Pete In, who belonged to a farm information group in Prairie; Payne Out, who lived in Prairie but did not belong; Otto In, who belonged to an Ozark farm information group; and Oliver Out who lived in Ozark but did not belong to such a group.

Pete In and Otto In had many characteristics in common. They were in the younger age group and their

prestige in their respective communities was high. Both Pete In and Otto In had a good education, were making high incomes, and had lived a long time in the community. Although Pete did not operate a very large farm, he had a high level of living to correspond with his high income. Otto operated a large farm, but his level of living was lower in spite of the fact that he also made a good income.

Pete In and Otto In each had high improved practice ratings and high information receptivity. As might be expected, they were both named often as innovators. However, Pete received a low social participation score and also received few mentions as a source of information while Otto received a high social participation score and many mentions as a source of information.

Farm informational groups were good places to learn about progressive and successful modern farming. Both Pete In and Otto In were successful farmers; and both were recognized as innovators. Yet Pete evidently did not pass on to his neighbors the information he had gathered, while Otto, who had a high social participation score, probably had more opportunities to pass on farm information to others, and took advantage of these opportunities.

Payne Out and Oliver Out had lower prestige, were older, and had less education. They had not spent as long in the community and their incomes were not as high. Payne Out had a large farm, but since his improved

practice rating and his information receptivity score were both low, his farm was not earning as much as it could. Oliver Out's improved practice rating and information receptivity score also were low. Neither man was named often as an innovator. Although neither of their incomes was high, there was a difference in how the two men lived; Payne's level of living was moderately low, while Oliver's was high in spite of his income level. Oliver Out had a low social participation score, and was named very few times as a source of farm information; Payne Out, who had a high social participation score, was named often as a source of farm information.

The Outs averaged 10.3 years older. Among the Ins' scores which were higher than those of the Outs', they earned an average of \$1662 more (Ozark had the largest difference of \$2124, compared to Prairie's income difference of \$1200). The Ins' improved practice ratings averaged 15.84 higher. And although the Ins of farm information organizations operated a median 75.5 acres more than the Outs in Ozark, in Prairie the Outs operated a median 40 acres more than the Ins.



THE FARM SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

Farm Bureau
Missouri Farmers Assn. (M.F.A.)
Other Cooperatives
Milk Marketing Organizations
Other Local Organizations
with Economic Services

In our farm service organizations grouping, Philip In was the member of a farm service group in Prairie and Parker Out was the non-member. Olaf In belong to a farm service group in Ozark, while Oswald Out also lived in Ozark but was not a member of such a group.

Philip In and Olaf In both had high prestige in their respective communities; they had lived there for quite a long time. Their educational level was low. They had large farms and, since they were well thought of, and because their social participation scores were high, they were mentioned often by their neighbors as sources of farm information. Philip In, who was the younger, used his big farm to earn a good income, and thus also enjoyed a high level of living. His improved practice rating and his information receptivity were high. He evidently applied his knowledge successfully to his farm. His neighbors mentioned him often as an innovator.

Olaf In was older. His improved practice rating and information receptivity were not high. Thus, even though he had a big farm, his income and level of living were both low. He was not mentioned often as an innovator.

Parker Out and Oswald Out, who did not belong to farm service groups, had higher education but lower pres-

tige; they also operated smaller farms. They had not spent as many years in the community. Their social participation scores were low. All of these factors combine to explain the fact that their neighbors did not often mention them as sources of farm information. Parker Out, who was older, earned a smaller income, and had a lower level of living. Since his improved practice rating and information receptivity were low, it could have been predicted that his neighbors would not often mention him as an innovator. But Oswald Out, who was younger, earned a high income and enjoyed a high level of living even though his farm was not large. Since his information receptivity and improved practice rating were high, Oswald's neighbors mentioned him often as an innovator.

The average difference between the Ins' higher social participation scores and those of the Outs was 4.03. Likewise, their mentions as a source were higher by an average difference of 1.45. In some of the characteristics for farm service organizations, the Ozark scores were the reverse of those in Prairie. Thus, income of the Prairie Ins averaged \$2120 higher than that of the Prairie Outs but the Ozark Outs topped the Ins by \$633.

This chart compares scores of the groupings with each other, and ranks them as first, second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth. Thus, the group with the highest educational level for the community is found in the first rank column, while the group with the lowest educational level falls in the sixth rank column. Likewise, the group with the oldest age level has been given first rank and that with the youngest age level has been given the sixth rank.

Each group is represented by a symbol in the chart. In several instances, two groups obtained an identical score; when this happened, they were considered "tied." Thus, they have been placed together midway between the two rankings for which their scores tied.

Rankings of Organizational

SOCIAL



FARM INFORMATION



PRAIRIE

Characteristic (highest to lowest)	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
Prestige					
Age					 (tied for 5th)
Last Grade Completed					
Acres Operated					 (tied for 5th)
Years in Community				 (tied for 4th & 5th)	
Total Gross Income					
Level of Living					
Total Social Participation					
Improved Practice Rating					
No. Times Mentioned As Source					
No. Times Mentioned As Innovator			 (tied for 3rd & 4th)		

Groupings . . .

FARM SERVICE

COMMODITY MARKETING CONTROL

ADVISORY

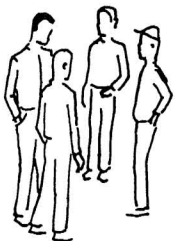
CHURCH



. . . In Relation to Their Respective Scores

OZARK

6th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
 5th & 6th)						
		 (tied for 2nd & 3rd)				
 5th & 6th)						
				 (tied for 4th & 5th)		
		 (tied for 2nd & 3rd)			 (tied for 5th & 6th)	



COMMODITY MARKETING CONTROL ORGANIZATION

National Farmers
Organization (NFO)

In our commodity marketing control grouping, Paddy In was the member of a commodity marketing control group in Prairie; Palmer Out also lived in Prairie but did not belong to a commodity marketing control group. Orville In was the member of a commodity marketing control group in Ozark, while Osbert Out did not belong to such a group.

Paddy In and Orville In possessed characteristics which were very similar. Both men had higher prestige in the community than did non-members. They had lived in the community fewer years. Their education was high, their farms were large, and their income and level of living were both high. Their social participation scores were also high, as were their information receptivity and improved practice ratings. Their neighbors named them often as sources of information. Paddy In, who was younger, was also named often as an innovator. Orville In was not.

Palmer Out and Osbert Out possessed lower prestige and had spent more years in the community. Their educational levels were lower, and their farms were small-

er than those of the commodity control group members. Their gross income and level of living were also lower. In spite of their high prestige, their social participation scores were low and they were not often mentioned as sources of farm information. Both men also had lower information receptivity and improved practice ratings than the Ins. Even so, Osbert Out, who was younger than Orville In, was mentioned fairly often by his neighbors as an innovator. Palmer Out was not.

The Outs had spent an average of 3.38 more years in the community than the Ins (6.62 years in Prairie and only 0.13 in Ozark). In both communities, however, the Ins' scores were higher for the number of acres operated, with an average difference of 81 acres (122 acres in Ozark and 40 acres in Prairie), and for gross income, with an average difference of \$1765 (\$2847 in Prairie and \$683 in Ozark). The Ins' scores were also higher than the Outs' scores for total social participation, with an average difference of 3.46; and for improved practice ratings, with an average difference of 12.02.



ADVISORY ORGANIZATIONS

Parent Teachers Assn. (PTA)
School Board
Road Board
Extension Council
Community Hospital Board
Missouri Good Roads Assn.
Agricultural Agency Councils

In this grouping, Perry In was our member of an advisory group in Prairie and Page Out, the non-member. Osmund In of the Ozark community was a member of an advisory group, while Otis Out was not.

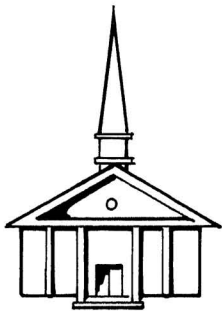
The characteristics of Perry In and Osmund In were identical. Perry and Osmund both had a good education, a fairly high prestige rating, were younger, and had spent

fewer years in the community. They operated large farms, earned high incomes, and enjoyed a high level of living. As might have been expected from their successful farms, their information receptivity and improved practice ratings were high. Their neighbors mentioned them often both as innovators and as sources of farm information. Their social participation scores were also high.

Page Out and Otis Out were older, had spent more years in their communities, and had low prestige ratings. Their educational levels were lower than those of Perry In and Osmund In. They operated small farms, earned a fairly low income, and had a low level of living. Their social participation scores were low, as were their information receptivity and improved practice ratings. They were not mentioned often by their neighbors either as innovators or as sources of farm information.

Ins operated an average of 101.05 more acres than

the Outs (143.1 more in Prairie and 59.0 more in Ozark) and averaged \$3293.50 more gross income (\$6104 more in Prairie and \$483 more in Ozark). The Ins also received higher total social participation scores, with an average difference of 8.55; higher improved practice ratings with an average difference of 12.73; and more mentions as sources of farm information, with an average difference of 2.89. The Outs, on the other hand, were older, with an average difference of 7.31 years; the difference in Prairie was 10.42 years and in Ozark, 4.20 years.



CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS

All Churches and Their Organizations Within the Two Areas.

Pierre In represents those who were members of a church group in Prairie and Phil Out represents those who were not. Ottie In represents the Ozark church group members and Orlando Out, the non-members.

Pierre In and Ottie In were in the younger age group, had a prestige rating that was fairly high, and had lived a long time in the community. Both their social participation scores and their improved practice ratings were high. Prairie, as earlier studies indicated, exerted a heavy pressure upon its citizens to belong to a church. It was very much the accepted thing to do. Pierre In had a good education and a large farm, made a good income, and enjoyed a high level of living. His information receptivity was high and he was often mentioned by his neighbors as a source of farm information, although he was not mentioned so often as an innovator.

Ottie In, the Ozark church member, had a comparatively low level of education and operated a small farm . . . but even though his income was fairly low, he, too, enjoyed a high level of living. Ottie's neighbors did not mention him often as a source of farm information. However, his information receptivity and his number of mentions as an innovator were the same as the scores received by Orlando Out, the Ozark non-church member.

Phil Out and Orlando Out were older, and had lower prestige ratings. They had spent fewer years in the community. Their social participation scores and im-

proved practice ratings were low. Phil Out, who had a fairly low education, operated a small farm from which he made a rather low income and, consequently, a low level of living. Although his information receptivity score was low and his neighbors did not often mention him as a source of farm information, Phil received a notable number of mentions as an innovator. Orlando Out, in Ozark, had a high education and a large farm. Although his gross income was high, his level of living was low. Orlando's neighbors mentioned him often as a source of farm information, while his information receptivity score and his number of mentions as an innovator about equaled those of Ottie In, the Ozark church member.

As for differences between the Ins and the Outs of both communities, the Ins received higher improved practice ratings, with an average difference of 7.1 (the actual difference in Prairie was 12.0, while the Ozark difference was 2.2). The Outs, on the other hand, were older, with an average difference of 6.85 years (the actual difference in Prairie was 13.3 years, while the Ozark difference was .4 year). Prairie's Ins operated a median 62 acres more than the Outs, while in Ozark it was the Outs who operated 24 more acres. Similarly, Prairie's Ins earned \$3361 more gross income than Prairie's Outs, while in Ozark the Outs earned \$50 more than the Ins.

SUMMARY

At this point in a broader study, joiners and non-joiners of the various organizational groupings have been observed and compared to each other. The results of these comparisons can be summarized as follows:

Do certain types of people join one kind of organization and do different types join another kind?

Apparently the members of different organizational groupings did possess distinct characteristics. But variations between joiners and non-joiners of various groups varied only in the amount of difference. Joiners of farm informational groups, for instance, possessed quite different characteristics than did non-joiners. This difference was particularly high-lighted because only those people who sought up-to-date progressive farm information tended to belong to such an organization. Therefore, as a group, they possessed distinctive characteristics which revealed a fairly large over-all difference from the non-member's characteristics. Thus, the answer to the question would be a generalized "yes."

Are the people who join a social organization, such as a Rod and Gun Club, different from those people who join a farm service organization such as M.F.A. or Farm Bureau?

Yes, they were different. Nearly everyone belonged, or could have belonged, to a farm service organization, since membership depended upon a use of the particular services offered. But belonging to a social organization depended on particular interests and activities which drew the individual into that group. Therefore, the people who joined a social organization, for example, tended to be more unique. They could be more sharply delineated because fewer of them belonged to the group and because, since their membership was more exclusive,

their interests and characteristics tended to be quite similar.

The more loosely formed, wider membership of a farm service organization embraced a larger, more diverse group. Thus, their general characteristic profile was different from that of a social group.

The example using these groups could have been applied to other organizational groupings: i.e., farm informational groups (more exclusive membership) might have been compared to church groups (wider, more loosely knit membership) as another example.

Are the people who join a particular organization similar in type in different communities of the state?

Yes, according to this study. Such people were similar even though they lived in different areas. Here again the idea of exclusive versus non-exclusive membership entered the picture. Thus, the farm service organization, with its wider membership, revealed less similarity in some characteristics of members in different areas. But the commodity marketing control grouping, with its more exclusive membership, revealed complete similarity between members living in different communities (i.e., all members' scores could be compared as higher or lower than those of non-members in both communities, with no "reversed score" situations). The same relation existed among all the other organizational groupings.

Distinct similarities did exist among joiners in different communities. The variations existed only in degree.

Joiners and non-joiners surround each of us every day. After reading the results of this study, you might like to do a little neighborhood study of your own. Try the accompanying chart on some acquaintances. Are they joiners or non-joiners? The results can be fascinating.

Test a Friend and See if He Is a Joiner:

Compared to others you know, rate each of his characteristics as high, medium, or low. Then note the organizations to which he belongs. Refer back to descriptions of various organizational groupings and see if the pattern of his ratings is similar to one of the descriptions.

What do you think his prestige in the community is?

How would you rate his age?

How would his education be rated?

How about the number of acres he operates?

Has he lived in the community for many years?

Is his gross income high, medium, or low compared to others in the community?

How would you rate his level of living?

What about his approximate social participation, including membership, participation and offices held?

Can you judge his information receptivity?

Can you rate how many improved farm practices he has adopted, compared to others in the community?

Do you think he is considered a source of farm information ?

Do you think he is an innovator?

Is he a joiner?

YES

NO

In what organizational grouping? _____

HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW