

FARM GOALS IN CONFLICT

Family Farm, Income, Freedom, Security



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Iowa State University Center
for
Agricultural and Economic Development

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Iowa State University Press
Ames, Iowa, U.S.A.

Series list of the Center for Agricultural and Economic Development. (Work of the Center is supported in part by a grant from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation):

From the Iowa State University Press (hard-bound books)

Adjustments in Agriculture: A National Basebook, 1961

Dynamics of Land Use: Needed Adjustments, 1961.

Goals and Values in Agricultural Policy, 1961.

Labor Mobility and Population in Agriculture, 1961.

Food: One Tool in International Economic Development, 1962.

From the Center for Agricultural and Economic Development

Adjustment and Its Problems in Southern Iowa, 1959.

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Cold War, World Poverty and Land-Grant Colleges, 1962.

An Evaluation of Weather Factors in the Production of Corn, 1962.

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Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 64-13368

HD1759
C76
1963

Preface

AN INITIAL CONFERENCE on Goals and Values in Agricultural Policy was sponsored by the Center for Agricultural and Economic Development in June, 1960.¹ Being the first national seminar on this subject, the conference necessarily dealt with certain broad aspects of goals and values, both in farm and national societies, as these reflect on proposed and accepted agricultural policies and programs.

The proceedings of the initial conference were well received. It was widely recognized that the goals and values complex was an important influence in stimulating debate over alternative policies and in restraining or promoting particular legislation. Thus numerous persons proposed that another seminar be held to permit a deeper analysis and an extended philosophical evaluation of goals and values as they relate to the potential policies and structures of American agriculture. Major church groups in the United States formed an informal committee which suggested that the Center for Agricultural and Economic Development hold the second seminar.

The seminar was planned over a period of a year and a half. The following persons from the staff at Iowa State University did the basic planning for the conference:

Ward Bauder²
Earl O. Heady
W. G. Stucky

Lee Burchinal
G. S. Shepherd
Ross Talbot

Don Hadwiger
Emerson Shideler

¹See Center for Agricultural and Economic Development, "Goals and Values in Agricultural Policy," Iowa State University Press, 1961.

²Resident collaborator, USDA, Iowa State Univ.

Lee Burchinal served as chairman of the planning committee before he joined the staff of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Don Hadwiger initiated his employment at Iowa State University by assuming chairmanship of the committee. Emerson Shideler, Don Hadwiger and Edwin O. Haroldsen undertook the mammoth task of summarizing the final day of open dialogue and debate. The planning committee was aided by several representatives of church groups, especially the Rev. Edward W. O'Rourke, executive director, National Catholic Rural Life Conference.

The conference was structured to include position papers by major groups with programs or activities which necessarily assume certain values and goals for agriculture. These included church groups, farm organizations and governmental action, educational and policy organizations. Following presentation of papers by these groups, four behavioral scientists outside of agriculture analyzed and evaluated the position papers in respect to their consistency or inconsistency and in relation to reality under economic growth, social change and national purposes. Finally, a day of unstructured debate and dialogue was included in order that issues might be discussed in depth and differences might be compared and resolved where possible. In the last chapter of this book the dialogue is summarized, though perhaps imperfectly, since no brief could capture the vitality of the discussion.

Goals and values of both farm and nonfarm groups have important bearing on current and future policies and organization of agriculture. Lack of permanent solutions to continuing problems of the industry undoubtedly rests more on value conflicts than on lack of means to attain certain ends. It is hoped that this further dialogue on goals and values has helped to clarify these conflicts, to identify goals more clearly and to specify more consistent means to attain them.

Ability of different groups to discuss and promote goals for agriculture or to explain the values underlying them is a characteristic of democracy and freedom. Freedom would not prevail if alternative or even conflicting goals could not be discussed publicly by different groups. It is only in totalitarian regimes where this process is impossible. Public debate and discussion is a means whereby hypotheses can be extended and examined, existing data can be used to evaluate propositions and more realistic solutions can be devised. Certainly this seminar did not resolve all differences among groups. It did, however, bring together the major groups which hold very specific values and goals for agriculture. No similar "get together had been held. Through open discussion progress certainly was made in

identifying inconsistencies among goals, values, policy proposals and the basic elements of economic and social change. Equally important, some differences considered to exist were found to have little foundation when referred to a common framework of assumptions, knowledge and reality of economic change. Finally, a broadened environment may have been created, allowing or encouraging a continued dialogue among the various groups which propose specific policies and programs for agriculture.

EARL O. HEADY

Iowa State University

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