Review of the Farmer Committee System

REPORT OF THE STUDY COMMITTEE

WASHINGTON, D. C.
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REVIEW OF THE FARMER COMMITTEE SYSTEM

Report of the Study Committee

Members of the Study Committee:

Charles F. Brannan, Former Secretary of Agriculture

Morton Grodzins, Professor of Political Science, University of Chicago

Charles S. Hyneman, Professor of Political Science, Indiana University

William D. Knox, Editor, "Hoard's Dairyman"

A. Lars Nelson, Overseer, The National Grange, and Master, Washington State Grange

Charles R. Sayre, President and General Manager, Staple Cotton Cooperative Association

Douglas R. Stanfield, Executive Vice President, Ohio Farm Bureau Federation

Claude R. Wickard, Former Secretary of Agriculture

Harry B. Caldwell, Ex-officio, Chairman, National Agricultural Advisory Commission

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Chairman ..... A. Lars Nelson

Secretary ..... Grover C. Chappell, Staff Economist, U. S. Department of Agriculture

Staff Director ..... Joseph Hajda, Associate Professor of Political Science, Kansas State University

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SUMMARY

The farmer committee method of administering farm programs is sound.

We have reviewed the evidence, made personal investigations in depth, and consulted throughout the nation the judgment of thoughtful people who have observed these committees and their conduct during recent years. It is the opinion of this Study Committee that community, county, and State committees should be continued, and that their competence for administration should be more firmly secured.

The Committee recognizes that the Secretary of Agriculture is made responsible by the Congress for the administration of federally authorized farm programs. The elected farmer committees are not directly answerable to the Secretary. How to achieve efficient program operation with the double thrust of local democratic action and the clear delineation of the Secretary's granted authority and administrative obligation to control was the major problem before the Committee.

There are two feasible alternatives to the present dependence on committees for administration of farm programs:

1. An administrative structure with line of command running from the Secretary to appointed State and county officials who exercise all of the authority now vested in State, county, and community committees.

2. A structure with line of command running through the State to the county, but with quasi-judicial and limited policy-making authority placed in State and county boards composed of experienced farmers.

We gave very considerable thought to each of these alternatives, and we rejected them in favor of the present committee system.

Notwithstanding this general conclusion, the Committee believes that there are weaknesses in the present system and that several constructive changes should be made in the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) to strengthen the administration of farm programs.

The recommendations of this Committee have three major objectives:

1. To attract the most competent and responsible men to serve on community, county, and State committees and to equip them for imaginative and thoughtful administration of farm programs.

2. To give the Secretary of Agriculture and the Administrator of ASCS greater assurance that they can intervene effectively with State and county committees to forestall embarrassing errors, and to correct unwholesome situations which have occurred.

3. To improve the quality of administration, facilitate the interchange of ideas, and secure maximum utilization of experience at national, State, and local levels.

There is a great unevenness in the quality of men who have been attracted to serve on the community and county committees. In many counties, farmers take great interest in the selection of competent local men who are leaders of the farm population and who are willing to serve on the committees. In these circumstances, farm programs are administered intelligently, equitably and firmly.

In other areas, however, farmers do not take advantage of their right to vote for community committeemen. Often the most able men are not elected to serve and those elected refuse to take their jobs seriously.

To upgrade committee personnel, we recommend certain changes in the length of term of office and tenure of county committeemen. We also propose changes in the method of electing both county and community committeemen. We recommend that members of the county committee be elected for three-year terms instead of one year. A rotation would permit the election of only one county committeeman each year. Further, we recommend that no person be eligible to serve more than three consecutive terms. He may be re-elected after a one-year absence, however. To assure participation by active farmers, a man must be not over 70 years old when elected to a county committee.

Vacancies on the county committee should be filled each year by a vote of all farmers eligible to participate in an ASCS-administered farm program. Election for both county and community committeemen should be by mailed ballot.

The Committee was disturbed by evidence that some partisan appointments of State committeemen and farmer fieldmen had a tendency to undermine morale in the committee system. Such political appointments also tend to discourage participation by farmers who object to the political onus. We recommend, therefore, that appointments to State committees be made without respect to party affiliation.

Several proposals are recommended to give the Secretary better administrative control on the State and county level. We propose he appoint the State Executive Director and that he exercise greater discretion to intervene in county situations that have deteriorated through inept or irresponsible action.

We recommend that the State Executive Director, farmer fieldmen, and county office managers be selected on merit principles alone. They should be assured that theirs is a career service, with opportunity to move geographically and upward in the administrative structure.

More intensive effort directed to instruction and training is urgently required. This is true for community and county committeemen as well as for farmer fieldmen and county office managers. We are impressed with the training programs developed in some of the States and suggest they be made models for emulation by the rest of the nation.

Finally, the Committee was concerned about the volume and the detailed character of instructions and regulations prepared to guide and control both State and county committees. We believe they are unnecessarily complex and impose too many restrictions on the committees. We contend that the attraction of better men to committee service will justify granting greater discretionary authority to county committees. Thus, they will more effectively adapt farm programs to local conditions.

These are the major recommendations of the Study Committee. Much more detailed recommendations are incorporated in the full Report.

THE PROBLEM

The purpose of the study and of the Report is to appraise the farmer committee system, to determine its strength and weaknesses and to recommend improvements that would result in more effective administration of farm programs.

The Secretary of Agriculture is made responsible by the Congress for the administration of federally authorized farm programs. The elected farmer committees are not directly answerable to the Secretary. How to achieve efficient program operation with the double thrust of local democratic action and clear delineation of granted authority and power to control is of major consequence to both farmers and the public in general.

The problem of finding a satisfactory working balance between the interests of greater administrative responsibility and the support of farm people for a decentralized, farmer-elected committee system, is the most basic problem that confronts the responsible national decision-makers dealing with the administration of farm programs. The Study Committee does not view them as mutually destructive. The two principles can be combined without making the Government too dominant by destroying the farmer-elected committees, or too ineffective by maintaining inadequate control and supervision over local administration of farm programs. The task is to suggest internal improvements in the farmer committee system so as to be more responsive to the needs of American agriculture in the years ahead.

1. The Environment

The farmer committee system is the product of the work of several groups--farmers, farm leaders, career people in Government, and political leaders. The many diverse influences which pervade modern Government have affected the committee structure as it has evolved during the past thirty years.

The farmer committee system exists in a very complex political environment, in which political power is dispersed and divided. Central in this environment are the President, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the other political executives serving the Administration. There are also the career people who provide expert knowledge of another kind, and whose contribution to the continuity of government is so important in periods of changes of party control.

Key roles in this environment are played by the members of the Congress whose voice is paramount in the formulation of farm policy and persuasive in the administration of farm programs. The views of the spokesmen for the farm interest groups must be considered. State and local units of government which come into contact with the committee system influence some administrative actions. Participating farmers whose interests are to be satisfied in the process of administration of farm programs constitute the final judges.

It is in this environment that administrative problems need to be studied and appraised.

2. Administrative Dimension

Under Presidential supervision, the responsibilities for administration of farm programs authorized by law are carried out by the Secretary of Agriculture acting through the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS). The principal function of this largest agency of the Department of Agriculture is the protection and stabilization of farm income by means of

(1) Support of farm prices through loans to farmers on specific commodities and direct purchases of commodities from farmers and processors

(2) Management of the commodity inventories acquired by the Government as a result of price-support operations, including storage, transportation, sales, export payments, donations and financing of foreign disposal programs

(3) Production adjustment through acreage allotments and marketing quotas for certain designated commodities, retirement of land from crop production, and payments to farmers for diversion of acreage from specific crops, such as feed grains and wheat

(4) Payments to sugar and wool producers to assure adequate supplies, and to protect them in relation to foreign competition

(5) Conservation assistance by sharing with farmers the cost of installing needed soil, water, woodland, and wild-life conserving practices

(6) Certain marketing agreements and orders, such as milk orders, designed to attain market stabilization

(7) Emergency disaster relief by providing feed to farmers whose supplies have been destroyed by flood, drought, or other natural disaster

(8) Planning for national defense in the fields of agricultural production and availability of food reserves and feed stocks.

The farmer committee system, authorized by Congress as a means by which the Secretary of Agriculture would administer on the local level these federal farm programs, is expected to perform its job under the supervision and control of the ASCS.

The activities of farmer committees are confined to the duties prescribed by Congress and implemented by regulations and instructions issued by the ASCS. By law, their function is to carry out the federally authorized farm programs at the farm level. This function involves funds appropriate by Congress from the United States Treasury:

(1) Program funds to be disbursed to farmers who participate in federal farm programs

(2) Administrative funds to be alloted for all expenses in administering farm programs.

Some people seem to believe that the farmer committeemen are regular employees or part of field staff of the Department of Agriculture. From this viewpoint, the committees and their employees are subordinates of the Secretary of Agriculture for carrying out duties vested in him.

The federal nature of the farmer committee system is reflected in the benefits Congress has provided for the ASC county employees. With the exception of leave and the Civil Service tenure, their fringe benefits are the same as those enjoyed by Government employees.

There are others who maintain that the committee system at the county level has a different nature. The circumstances of selections of the committees and employment of the personnel are such that they do not answer directly to the Secretary. The primary responsibility of the committees is to the farmers by whom they are elected, whom they represent and who can dismiss them annually through the election process. The primary responsibility of the county office managers is to the county committees who hire them and who can fire them almost at will.

It is this conflict of views which gives rise to problems in the administration of farm programs. The ability of the farmers to "wipe the slate clean" at the county level through the election process, even including the county office manager and staff makes it possible to select persons who are not in sympathy with the purposes and provisions of farm programs authorized by law. Federal funds are applied on the county level of administration with a significant degree of local freedom subject to federal regulations and guidelines. This creates problems for the Secretary who is finally responsible for the activities of thousands of persons in the committee system over which his control is less than complete. He uses the State committees, the State Executive Directors and the farmer fieldmen and State office staff, to secure a compliance with the legislated programs. He also has the services of the field personnel of the ASCS Internal Audit and Investigation Division, and other field services.

But the point is that the Secretary of Agriculture, charged with the responsibility for the effective administration of farm programs and for expenditure of federal funds, is directed to do the job under unique conditions where the county and community personnel are not appointed by him and have noteworthy independence.

However, there is another question which needs to be answered: Could the Secretary secure more effective administration of the programs if the elected farmer committees were to be replaced by appointed committees and the county office managers were brought into the Civil Service system? The Study Committee believes that an administrative structure with line of command running from the Secretary of Agriculture to appointed State and county officials would create more problems than it would solve. The Study Committee believes that the advantages of having farmer-elected county and community committees clearly outweigh all the disadvantages.

The Study Committee finds that farmers have confidence in the administration of farm programs on their behalf by neighbors elected to community and county committees. This provides a compelling reason for maintaining, strengthening, and clearly defining operational responsibilities of the farmer committees. The farmer-elected committees are especially needed when changes or new programs are introduced, because producers rely on the committees to understand and explain the purposes and provisions of the innovations. Farm people feel that the decisions of elected farmer committees will be practicable, fair, and equitable. Careful review by the Study Committee of alleged frauds which have recently received wide publicity shows very little involvement of elected farmer committees.

Over many years, the farmer committee system has become deeply imbedded in American agriculture. The Study Committee found no alternative system of administration of farm programs which has the support of farmers.

3. Congressional Dimension

The Congress of the United States determines the purposes and provisions of farm programs. It exercises broad control over the general procedure used in their implementation. It oversees and reviews the administrative structure and its functioning both in the Department of Agriculture and in the field through periodic investigations and counseling with the Department. Congress reviews budget requests and makes appropriations for the administration of farm programs. It makes studies, and informs the public about the nature of farm problems.

There is almost constant collaboration between key members of the Congress and leading officials of the Department of Agriculture in appraising, planning, and drafting of proposals for farm legislation. Such collaboration is carried on through members of Congress affiliated with the President's party but members of the minority are frequently consulted.

Another important set of relationships exists between members of the Congress and the various farm and commodity organizations and farm business interests. These interest groups are concerned with many aspects of the administration of farm programs and attempt to enlist the support of members of the Congress for their proposals. Members of the Congress from major agricultural States are particularly responsive to the demands affecting important segments of their electorate.

Farm legislation often reflects the extent of disagreement about the solution of farm problems. In cases of considerable disagreement, many compromises are necessary. Statutes enacted under such circumstances lead to complex regulations and difficulties in administration. Disagreements resulting in prolonged legislative delays have a serious impact upon county administration. When the delay extends past the time for planting major crops in the county, administration is especially difficult. In all such cases, the administration of farm programs becomes more complex and more exacting.

Given the historical arrangements for the selection of community, county, and State farmer committees, it is both natural and logical for members of the Congress to be interested in the functioning of the farmer committee system. They know key personnel in the committee system in their respective districts and States, and from time to time hear from them. They react to ASCS administrative situations and developments affecting their constituents, and advance suggestions for changes in the administration of farm programs to strengthen the bases of their support. This interest on the part of members of the Congress from both political parties assures the public that the committee system does not become a mere adjunct of the party in control of the Executive Branch.

Many members of the Congress thus have good knowledge about the farmer committee system, its leaders and its functioning, and have keen interest in keeping in touch with the farmers in and out of the committee system. They note quickly the impact of farm programs as they are administered through the farmer committees, and they are sensitive to signs of unfairness, imbalance, and poor administration. They know what the public will not tolerate. They rise in support of the farmer committee system. The Congressional Record and the record of the appropriations hearings contain ample evidence of their support of the elected farmer committee system.

A. COUNTY COMMITTEE

The Study Committee finds that the elected county committees remain a vital element of the ASCS system of administration of farm programs.

There are two important factors which justify the need for elected county committees.

1. The strong tradition of localism in agricultural affairs which has survived the technological revolution in agriculture and the far-reaching political, social, and economic changes in America.

2. The large measure of voluntary cooperation necessary to the success of the farm programs. The acceptance of the program by the farmers depends greatly on their confidence in the ability, integrity and diligence of the elected committeemen. Many programs require the approval by two-thirds of the voting producers in referenda before they can be put into operation.

If the committees operate wisely and imaginatively, they can and do make an invaluable contribution to effective administration of farm programs. If they are encouraged to exercise their judgment intelligently, they can be an important instrumentality in aiding and advising the ASCS on all levels of administration.

If the committees are to become more effective in the process of administration of farm programs, they should play a leading role in ASCS field operations. To increase their effectiveness, they should be elected directly by the eligible producers. There should be more continuity in their services.

Recommendation: Renew and strengthen the county committees and use them more effectively; broaden the base of their election and provide for continuity of their service.

1. ROLE

An effective county committee plays important roles in the process of

a. Supervision of county office operations

b. Adjudication of cases under the committee's jurisdiction

c. Advice to State and national offices

d. Popularization of specialized information

a. Supervision of County Office Operations

An effective county committee supervises county office operations. It is not the job of the committee to spend its energy on the administrative details of the operations involving clerical or routine office work. The task of the committee is to supervise efficient and economical administration of farm programs. It has the task to assure itself that the operations of the office are in compliance with program requirements and with the decisions made by the committee. It must further assure itself that the office manager and employees furnish the necessary information to the farmers in the county, and that the work of the office manager and employees is timely and efficient. It must also assure itself that individual employees are not involved in fraudlent action, and that they are not showing favoritism to any person or group of persons, or indifference, or obstinate attitudes, or opposition to serving the needs of farmers. Therefore, the committee has the job to set up, to observe, to check and to require such reports, reviews, and other devices as will assure it that this supervisory function can be accomplished effectively.

During the period from 1954 to 1961, the role of county committees was modified. Important changes affecting the role of the committees were announced in 1961 by the Secretary of Agriculture. However, the Study Committee finds that the tendency survives in some States to discourage the county committee from discharging their responsibility for effective supervision of county office operations. Unnecessary restrictions on the number of days the committeemen devote to their responsibilities do persist. The net result is that persons who are supposed to perform administrative work more frequently intrude in policy-making functions than the committees in administrative work. The narrow and one-sided interpretations of the delicate question of division of local responsibilities for administration and policy-making must be thrown out, if the committees are to play an effective role in the process of supervision. Any action which impairs the ability of committees to perform their functions and carry out their responsibilities should be eliminated.

Recommendation: 1. Remove all unnecessary restrictions on the number of days the committeemen devote to their responsibilities.

2. Require evidence in writing, by signature or otherwise, that all three committeemen have considered significant actions or decisions by the committee or the county office manager beyond the usual routine.

b. Adjudication of Cases Under the Committee's Jurisdiction

An effective county committee has to play an extremely important role as impartial judge in the process of adjudicating a variety of cases. The task of rendering these judgments is neither easy nor popular. Many persons are reluctant to accept the responsibilities of committeeman because they prefer not to be exposed to considerable criticism generated by this difficult and often disagreeable task of balancing the general and particular interests, and of disciplining their fellow farmers.

By and large the committees perform their extremely difficult role in the process of adjudication satisfactorily. The judgments are made by practical local farmers who can be expected to understand the farmer's problems and to apply their decisions with fairness. However, the Study Committee found criticism of some committeemen indicating that favoritism to friends may have been reflected in some decisions.

c. Advice to State Committee and National Office

An effective county committee plays an important role in the process of advising State Committee and the Washington office about local conditions and developments, and recommending to them desirable changes in existing programs. However, the extent to which individual county committees undertake to exercise this task depends primarily upon how well they understand the existing programs. State and national officials should be readily accessible and receptive to suggestions from the county committees. Specific recommendations about communications between the various levels of administration of farm programs are designed to make it possible for the county committees to perform this role more satisfactorily.

d. Popularization of Specialized Information

An effective county committee will make sure that farmers understand what the program can do for them, and what it cannot do. Then the individual farmer is in a position to make an informed decision on participation in the program.

This calls for improved informational processes and effective use of channels through which farmers can be better informed about the background and the objectives of the programs, the need for them, the reasons for using certain procedures, the achievements of the programs, and related questions. It is the duty of the county committee to carry out

an aggressive information program for farmers, through community committeemen wherever possible, to assist in community meetings in order to keep the farmers fully informed and to provide other opportunities for discussions with them so that they can have a clear understanding of various programs. Better informed farmers, in cooperation with their own local committeemen, who show real strength and vitality, become more appreciative of the programs and lend support to them. This results in conditions conducive to a healthier atmosphere for carrying out the programs authorized by law.

Especially important is the task of the county committee to familiarize farmers in advance, so far as possible, with new programs to be inaugurated. The farmers should be made aware of the fact that the county committee is elected by truly popular vote and exists to render a service to the welfare of the producers, and that it is constantly holding itself in readiness to be of help with the farmer's problems relative to participation in farm programs.

At present, many committees lack the necessary inspiration, information, and training to discharge their responsibilities. The net result is that many farmers are confused about the programs, do not appreciate them, and support them reluctantly, if at all.

The Study Committee recognizes, however, that some sincere people do not agree with the programs. It found that there are some committeemen who disagree with the authorized programs which they are expected to carry out.

Recommendation: Inform and provide training for county committeemen so that they recognize their responsibilities, understand them well, and play a major role in ASCS field operations.

2. DUTIES

The present ASCS regulations contain the following description of the general duties of the county committees:

The county committees, subject to the general direction and supervision of the State committee, and acting through community committeemen and other personnel, shall be generally responsible for carrying out in the county the agricultural conservation program, the price support programs as assigned, the acreage allotment and marketing quota programs, the wool incentive payment program, and programs under the Soil Bank Act, and except in the State of Hawaii the sugar program formulated pursuant to the Acts of Congress... and any other program assigned to it by the Scretary of Agriculture or the Congress.

The county committees perform important functions in production adjustment; conservation; price support; storage activities; Sugar Act programs; emergency disaster programs; and reconstitution of farms and farm acreage allotments.

a. Production Adjustment

Several specific duties are included:

1. Determination of the size of individual farm acreage allotments each year. For farms which have had such allotments for a number of years, this is typically the application by the office staff of a formula to the previous year's allotment. However, the committee must review and approve each such allotment every year. Also, in cases where the program has not been in effect for a significant number of years, or in the case of requests for farm acreage allotments for new growers, this requires the detailed consideration of individual farm histories for a period of years together with the other factors, such as

amount of land, type of soil, and rotation practices, which the law requires to be taken into consideration in the establishment of allotments.

2. Establishment of farm normal yields. This is required for diversion programs, such as emergency feed grain and wheat stabilization, and for other acreage allotment programs in those cases where the producer exceeds his acreage allotment. This is a particularly difficult job for a commodity like feed grains in which varying proportions of the farms' production are fed on the farm and, therefore, there are no sales records available to establish actual farm production in measured yield per acre.

3. Consideration of complaints and appeals of producers relating to their farm acreage allotments and normal yields. This is most important to the successful operation of the programs and particularly difficult to handle satisfactorily since in many cases farmers may be right but cannot prove it. It is also a most difficult task because many farmers tend to regard their best yields as their average yields.

Individual farmers may be able to prove yield, but the aggregate of individual yields in the county may exceed the guideline figures of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. In such instances, county or community committees are expected to adjust individual yields until they are consistent with the established statistical controls. For example, provable yields of barley in Idaho are almost one-third higher than the U. S. D. A. guideline figures.

The committees in some States visited by the members of the Study Committee indicated that they were handicapped by the absence of more adequate figures. Provable yield procedure complicates determination and administration of yield indexes and setting of farm yields for diversion payment purposes.

4. Arrangements for and supervision of the conduct of referenda to determine whether or not producers wish to have marketing quotas in effect. This is required by law each year in the case of wheat, rice and cotton, and each three years in the case of tobacco and peanuts.

5. Determination of the amount of penalty owed by the producers on farms which have exceeded their acreage allotment if marketing quotas are in effect, and arranging for the prompt collection of the penalties. This must be fairly and equitably accomplished and in strict conformance to the rules, since any action is subject to appeal in Federal District Court.

6. Determination of adjustments under the feed grain and wheat stabilization programs in the normal conserving acreage bases for those farms on which abnormal situations have occurred.

b. Conservation Programs

The following duties are involved:

1. Review of individual requests from farmers for approval of cost-sharing on conservation practices under the Agricultural Conservation Program (ACP). The committees approve or disapprove the practice and the extent of assistance requested.

2. Decision regarding which conservation practices will be offered to farmers in the county under the ACP as well as emergency conservation program if one is authorized. The committees decide on the kinds of conservation practices for which allocated funds are going to be spent in the county in any given year. To secure maximum beneficial practice results, some counties employ priority procedure and provide full participation by individual farmers on a first come first serve basis within budget allocation limits. The following year additional farmers on the list will receive assistance on the same basis.

3. Recommendations for changes in the provisions of State and national programs and the operational methods.

4. Findings concerning violations of program provisions and amounts of cost-sharing withheld from or refunds by individual farmers.

5. Hearing and making decisions on appeals from farmers and vendors who have supplied materials to farmers for carrying out conservation practices.

6. Review of requests for adjustments in conservation reserve contracts, and recommendation of the cancellation of conservation reserve contracts to the Secretary.

7. Determination of the extent of cost-sharing to be extended for the reestablishment of conservation measures on acreage under conservation reserve contracts on which the cover has been lost since it was put in the reserve.

c. Price Support

Three specific duties are included:

1. Supervision of the determination of producers' eligibility for price support. This includes determining that the farmer did not exceed permitted acreages, that the storage facilities in which the commodity would be stored were adequate and that there were no prior liens against the crop which would jeopardize the Government's investment.

2. Appointment of loan clerks and witnesses for equity transfers once each year in the case of cotton. These are usually employees of lending agencies such as tellers or clerks in local banks.

3. Decision concerning adequacy of collateral for loans in cases of farm-stored commodities reported as deteriorating by county office loan inspectors.

d. Storage Activities

The following duties are involved:

1. General supervision of storage facilities in the county (primarily bin sites) owned by the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC).

2. Determination of the adequacy of proposed farm storage and mobile facilities for equipment loans requested under program provisions.

3. Determination that the amount of the loan does not exceed the percentage of the total cost established by the State committee as a maximum.

4. Consideration of requests for extension or deferment of installment payments.

5. Calling loans when required.

e. Sugar Act Program

Two specific duties are included:

1. Hearings and decisions on wage claims of laborers.

2. Determination of abandonment and deficiency areas; abandonment and deficiency payments; prevented acreage credit; and qualifications for credit on all participating farms.

f. Emergency Disaster Programs

It is the duty of the committees to decide on the eligibility for and extent of assistance to victims of disaster where there is damage to the farms as a result of flood, drought, fire and other natural disasters.

g. Reconstitution of Farms and Farm Acreage Allotments.

Because in most instances the law specifies that acreage allotments will be established for "farms" and since many payment limitations and other program provisions are on a "farm" basis, it has been necessary to define a farm. The application of this definition to individual cases in the county is the responsibility of the county committee and one of its major headaches. Each time the operation of a tract of land changes from one person to another, or different leasing or working arrangements are entered into, it is necessary for the county committee to determine which tracts should be combined and treated as one farm and which should be considered as separate farms. The equitable application of this definition requires sound judgment because local traditions, topography, and other factors are involved. When a conclusion has been reached as to the proper reconstitution of tracts of land into one or more farms, then the acreage allotments, historical acreages, and yields established for the land must be similarly reconstituted.

Other Responsibilities

The committees have the responsibility of protecting the interests of tenants and sharecroppers as required by law by making certain that they participate equitably with their landlords in payments, acreage allotments, and other aspects of farm programs. This will on occasion require making decisions in cases of disputes between landlords and tenants and sharecroppers.

The programs for which the committees are assigned responsibility are nationwide programs authorized by law. Insofar as possible, these programs require equitable treatment of farmers from one State to another, and from one county to another, and between communities. This equity requires a considerable amount of uniformity as well as flexibility. In general, one farmer under the program should not be treated differently from another farmer in similar circumstances. To provide this equity and uniformity, nationwide and State-wide, instructions are issued by ASCS in Washington and the State committees. Because there are many sets of various situations that might be similar from State to State, the instructions cover a wide variety of possible circumstances. It is the responsibility of the county committee to carry out the authorized programs equitably within the general framework of the laws and the detailed instructions.

It is the responsibility of the committees to examine the share of funds, acreage allotments, and marketing quotas assigned to their counties as compared to other counties, and to attempt to insure that they are being treated equitably. For example, the committee may feel that the average yield assigned to the county for the previous year for a particular crop was too low and may decide to marshal evidence to get a larger acreage allotment or marketing quota for the county.

The present assignment of responsibilities permits a considerable amount of flexibility among counties in the various programs and provides the nationwide equity and uniformity essential to fair treatment of the individual farmer who participates in a program. However, the extent to which individual county committees undertake to exercise fully their responsibilities depends primarily upon how well they understand the various farm programs.

3. SELECTION AND TENURE

The law directs the Secretary of Agriculture to utilize the services of county committees consisting of three members who are farmers in the county. They are to be elected annually

by delegates from the various local areas in the county. Administrative regulations supplement the law by providing for such things as the eligibility requirements and the fixing of dates of the selection of county committees.

The law also provides that "in any county in which there is only one local committee the local committee shall also be the county committee." This means that in the 268 one-community counties, the county committees are elected directly by the farmers, whereas, the other 2,793 county committees are elected indirectly, by the convention method. The existing one-community counties vary widely in areas and population, and there has been little, if any, criticism of their operations. It would seem desirable to re-examine the possibility of increasing the number of one-community counties where there has been a sharp drop in the number of farms. The Secretary has the power under existing legislation to designate more counties as one-community counties.

Recommendation: Re-examine the feasibility of increasing the number of one-community counties.

However, both in the one-community and multi-community counties, substantial modifications in the selection system and tenure would seem to be desirable so as to strengthen the county committees and improve the administration of farm programs. These modifications include:

a. Improvements in the basis of selection

b. Longer and staggered term of office

c. Limit on the terms of office and on the age

d. Change in the method of election

a. Improvements in the Basis of Selection

The Study Committee finds that the standing and prestige of the committees is high where the committeemen are used effectively, where they are informed regarding their responsibilities, and where they receive public support and recognition for their accomplishments. In such counties, there is a great deal of enthusiasm and strength in the committees.

However, there are counties across the nation, where the committees' standing is less than satisfactory. In part, this is related to the question of the selection of committeemen.

In some counties, committeemen are selected from persons who do not have enough interest, dedication, sense of importance, and involvement. The more able farmers in such counties prefer to stay away from serving on the committees. In some counties, partisan political influences are so great that public confidence in the committee system is undermined. In about one-tenth of the counties retired persons are selected as committeemen.

Another obstacle to improvements in the basis of selection of competent committeemen are the present regulations restricting farmers engaged in political activity on an ad hoc basis, such as being a delegate to a county convention of any political party or political organization. In some cases, there is criticism that service on county committees does not attract the natural leaders of the farm community. Such criticism is in part caused by unreasonable prohibitions such as this one which penalizes farmers who are active in public life.

Equally important is the extent of manifestations of outright opposition to the program authorized by law. The Study Committee finds that most of the committeemen are in

sympathy with the programs they are elected to administer. They represent an important part of the programs' "supporting force" in the counties across the nation.

The Committee found only a small fraction of committeemen publicly opposed to the objectives of farm programs authorized by law. There is also a minority of committeemen who display their aversion to price support programs and government control of production less overtly, while another minority segment is neutral or indifferent.

The selection system for county committees should provide able members possessing the qualities of leadership, who are active farmers and have genuine interest in carrying out their public responsibilities effectively. They should be persons who have understanding of farm problems, and interest in good administration of farm programs.

Committeemen should not be selected for their political affiliation. However, they should be expected to give loyal support to honest and efficient administration of programs authorized by law. If a committeeman finds himself in a fundamental disagreement with the farm programs and the administrative approach to farm problems, and if he engages in public criticism, then he should resign from the committee and refuse to serve if re-nominated. This principle prevails in private business and is just as sound in the administration of farm programs.

Recommendation: 1. Re-examine the present eligibility criteria for candidacy for county committees, and remove all unreasonable prohibitions which penalize active farmers in positions of public leadership and responsibility.

2. Require that county committeemen pledge, after each election and before taking office, to administer the programs authorized by law effectively and responsibly, fairly and equitably, and to the best of their ability.

b. Longer and Staggered Term of Office

The programs administered by the county committees are many, varied, and complex in their provisions. A one-year term does not permit committeemen to acquire adequate knowledge about the programs and apply this knowledge in administering them. A three-year term would be more conducive to such expectations. The longer term also would allow the county committee adequate time to plan and carry out policies. This should bring about more consistent and stable policies at the county level. The longer term also should enable committeemen, county office staffs, and State personnel to work together on a more stable basis. With more knowledge about the various programs and more experience at working together, there should be less opportunity for misunderstanding and inadequate communication. The election of one member and one alternate each year would insure that experienced members would be on the county committee at all times. There would be at least one member on the committee accustomed to public service for the minimum of two years, and capable of exercising a salutory influence on the junior members. This should minimize the possibility of inexperienced members making decisions on the basis of inadequate understanding of the programs, and should result in further stability and continuity in administration at the county level. The additional stability should also benefit the work of the county office staffs. It would also be desirable to increase the number of alternate members from two to three. Because of the longer term, the need for alternate members will probably increase. The addition of one alternate member will also make it possible to elect one member and one alternate each year.

Recommendation: Change the term of office for members and alternate members of the county committees to three years, with one member and one alternate member elected each year.

c. Limit on the Terms of Office and on the Age

The present law sets no limit on the number of successive terms of office to which county committeemen may be elected. It leaves to the determination of the delegates to the county convention the number of terms that county committeemen may serve. While there is ample opportunity to replace unsatisfactory committeemen, some committeemen manage to perpetuate themselves in the office for too many terms and freeze out potential candidates for the job.

The Study Committee does not have data on the number of years of service of all county committee members, but it does have data on the tenure in office of some chairmen of county committees. Of the 450 chairmen who responded to the questionnaire sent out by the Study Committee, 35 percent had served on the county committee for 9 years or more. At the other extreme, 15 percent had served 1 year or less on the county committee, while the remaining 50 percent had served from 1 to 9 years.

Related to this is the question of the age, and the need to recruit for and engage in the committee work younger, active farmers, full of vigor and energy.

The adoption of the limit on the successive terms of office and on the age would bring fresh and perhaps different viewpoints to bear on the problems and issues with which the county committees are faced. It would thrust "new blood" into those entrenched committees which, in some instances, have become stagnated.

Recommendation: 1. Require that members of the county committees may serve three three-year consecutive terms, with a one-year lapse before they become eligible for further service.

2. Require that no member of a county committee be over the age of 70 at the time of his election.

d. Change in the Method of Election

The present method of election of County committees in multi-community counties is indirect, by the farmer delegates assembled in a convention. Basic to this method is the point of view that not all voting farmers have the specialized knowledge about the job and the candidates that is essential to making the best possible choice, and that community committee chairmen have this specialized knowledge and can make a better choice than all the voting farmers.

The Study Committee believes that all eligible farmers should vote directly by mailed ballot, on a county-wide basis, in selecting county committeemen. Such a method of election should provide greater public confidence in the committees as fully representative institutions of democracy.

To make use of the experience, specialized knowledge and judgment of the incumbent community committee chairmen, they should play the key role in the nominating process. Each community in the county should be given equal representation on the nominating board. At the same time, election on a county-wide basis would prevent domination of the committee by communities representing only a minority of eligible producers. A write-in provision would supply a means whereby groups dissatisfied with the candidates could present and vote for candidates of their own choosing.

Experience with different methods of election of community committeemen should be used to institute the direct election of county committeemen. Where mailed ballots or polling place methods of election have been used, significantly greater numbers of farmers have voted compared with the meeting method. In the 1961 election of community committeemen, in the 12 States using the meeting method of election in over 90 percent of their counties,

the median percentage of eligible farmers voting was 9 percent. In contrast, in those States using the mail ballot the median turnout was 32 percent, and for those using polling places, 30 percent. No State using meetings had over 13.3 percent voter turnout, while no State using one of the other two systems had less than 22.1 percent turnout.

In view of the fact that low participation in elections is subject to public criticism and does not enhance the prestige, strength and reputation of the farmer committees, every effort should be made to promote high turnout of voting farmers. The meeting method of election is conducive to very low turnout, and should not be used in the direct election of county committeemen. The mail-ballot method of election results in much higher voter turnout, and where a concerted effort is made to build up interest and get farmers to vote, it results in rather satisfactory participation in the elections. However, attempts to increase voter turnout should be related to strengthening the committees in other ways; if the farmers are convinced that the committees are doing an important job, they will want to participate in choosing their county committee members. Therefore, any action that emphasizes the importance of the committee work and informs all farmers of it, should contribute to high participation in the direct election of county committees.

The election of county committeemen should be held at the same time as the election of community committeemen. The joint election could stimulate more interest, and would be less expensive. The person receiving the highest number of votes would be elected committee member, and the candidate receiving the second highest number of votes would be elected as the alternate.

Recommendation: Change of method of election:

a. Candidates for the county committee should be nominated by the incumbent chairmen of the community committees who would prepare a list of nominees containing twice as many candidates as the number of positions to be filled in the election. Incumbent committeemen could be nominated for re-election if otherwise eligible.

b. County committeemen should be elected on a county-wide basis by mail ballot by all eligible producers; the election should be held at the same time as that for community committeemen; and the ballot should provide space for voters to write in the names of candidates not listed on the ballot.

c. In one-community counties, nominations should be made by the incumbent county committee, with the provision that additional nomination may be made by petitions signed by ten producers in the county. The committee would prepare a list of nominees containing twice as many nominees as the number of positions to be filled.

FOOTNOTE 1

Mr. Sayre and Mr. Knox asked to include the following statement, referring to above,

"There is an accord that broader farmer participation should be sought in the election of county committee members. A minority of the Study Committee believes, however, that the semi-detached status of county and community committees compels the selection of members with highest competence for consistently effective administration.

"To achieve both objectives the minority group proposes an alternative method for the election of county committee members:

> "Election of community committee members by use of mailed ballots, with broad participation at the community level, would provide opportunity for full demoncratic expression. Convention selection of county committee members by the elected community committeemen would usually

result in obtaining the services of outstanding individuals, particularly fitted for the narrowly specialized committee responsibilities.

"Respective State ASC committees should be permitted to choose between the method outlined in the body of the Report and the alternative recommended here."

B. COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

The Study Committee believes that the farmer-elected community committees are essential to the responsible and responsive administration of farm programs, and that it is necessary to renew and reinvigorate them.

In many counties across the nation, the community committees have not been used effectively and became the weak link in the whole system of administration. Many committeemen remain inactive during their tenure; they are poorly informed about the objectives and provisions of the programs; and they do not understand their responsibilities.

If the community committees are to play a more important role in local administration of farm programs, they need to be strengthened, trained and used in expanded assignments. Furthermore, the method of their election needs to be changed.

Recommendation: Renew and strengthen the community committees and use them more effectively; provide for an option as to their size, and change the method of their election as suggested below.

1. ROLE

An effective community committee plays two important roles:

a. It gives the county committee the benefit of its intimate knowledge of agricultural conditions in its community and recommends measures needed to affect the intended results in the administration of farm programs; and

b. It carries the objectives and provisions of the programs to the farmers in the community and explains them accurately and effectively whenever the need arises.

Effective community committees play an important role in building up farmer confidence and participation in farm programs. The counsel of such committees is invaluable to the ASCS field operations.

However, in many States community committes remain inactive. They need to be revitalized and their importance to farmer confidence and participation needs to be re-emphasized.

The most serious weakness of many community committees is their lack of understanding of the programs and of their responsibilities. The remedy is to give the community committeemen sustained training concerning the purposes and provisions of the program and their responsibilities.

The committeeman who has little or no knowledge about the needs for a program or how the program meets the needs of his community is not going to be in a position to answer the questions of his neighbors. The inability to answer their neighbors' inquiries causes embarrassment and results in the refusal of the uninformed committeemen to permit their names to be submitted for re-election.

It is important that the committeemen understand the program requirements so that they can explain them to their neighbors. If the committeemen understand the requirements, they can judge whether their neighbors meet these requirements and this may well help avoid

misunderstandings or other circumstances leading to non-compliance. This will reduce the workload at the county office.

The amount of time which community committees are allowed or required to devote to their jobs should be increased. In some areas, community committees work as much time for which they are not paid as the time for which they are paid, if all the time they spent on the program with their friends, neighbors, and associates is counted.

In some States many of the community committees hold annual dinner meetings at which their wives and sometimes local businessmen are invited. These dinner meetings play an important role in the success of the programs where they are held. They are a significant recognition device, emphasizing the significance of the committees. They are a desirable means of cultivating cordiality.

The Study Committee believes that there is no need to elect alternates to the three community committeemen. It also believes that there should be an option regarding the size of the community committees. Where there is a small number of farmers or little program activity in a community, the number of committeemen could be reduced from three members to one member and one alternate. The option would be exercised by the State committee only upon recommendation by the county committee. There is no need to change the present law; it provides that the committees are to be composed of "not more than three members."

Recommendation: 1. Inform and provide training for the community committeemen so that they can discharge their responsibilities more effectively.

2. Emphasize the significance of community committees to farmer confidence and participation.

3. Permit State committees to select the size of community committees upon recommendation of county committees by choosing between either a three-member community committee with no alternates or a one-member community committee with one alternate.

2. DUTIES

The present ASCS regulations contain the following description of the duties of the community committees:

The community committee shall:
A. Assist the county committee in carrying out programs assigned to it;
B. Inform farmers concerning the purposes and provisions of programs being administered in the county by the county committee;
C. Assist in arranging for and conducting necessary community meetings; and
D. Perform such other duties as may be assigned to it by the county committee.

The community committeemen are used in setting the preliminary base acres on the allotment crops. Since the establishment of allotments and yields can be a very controversial question, and the committeemen can be exposed to considerable criticism, it is not a very attractive task. Many potentially good committeemen are lost if this becomes the sole responsibility of community committees--a "hot potato" which nobody likes to handle.

Many committeemen are directly involved in the introduction and amplification of the concept of conservation and sound use of agricultural land resources to the farmers in their respective communities. They are asked to conduct much of the effort to inform farmers about the Agricultural Conservation Program (ACP) and the opportunities it offers. They are expected to help in establishing sources of supply of the necessary services and materials. This experience in promoting conservation work and administering

conservation cost-sharing programs ranks among the greatest of the contributions of the committees to the cause of renewable natural resources conservation. It is a task which gives more prestige to the community committees and should become even more attractive if and when the committeemen receive better training.

It is a rare county in which more than two or three meetings of community committeemen are held per year. This makes it extremely difficult to use the committeemen effectively. Uninformed or half-informed committeemen cannot perform their tasks in a satisfactory manner, even though the men are conscientious and dedicated individuals. Improvements in the training of community committeemen is the most pressing need and deserves special attention.

In some instances, community committeemen are used to check performance, grain in storage or delivery, and similar tasks. Most of the committeemen do not have time to do so much work. However, such work is a source of knowledge of the program for the committeemen who are capable and willing to do such tasks.

The difficulty in getting good farmers to accept community committee positions often arises from the feeling that these positions are low in prestige because they contain little responsibility except to decide some controversial questions like the establishment of allotments and yields. General consensus indicates that the committee responsibilities must go far beyond this phase of the program if good men are to be persuaded to accept the positions.

Recommendation: Make more effective use of community committees thereby enhancing their acceptance and prestige.

3. SELECTION AND TENURE

The law directs the Secretary of Agriculture to utilize the services of local (or community) committees elected by farmers annually in the local areas, designated by him as units for administration of farm programs. Administrative regulations provide for the eligibility requirements, the choice of methods and the fixing of dates of elections.

The Study Committee does not find the present measures regarding the elections satisfactory. If the community committees are to be revitalized, substantial modifications in the election system are desirable. They include:

a. Improvements in the basis of selection

b. Change in the method of election

a. Improvements in the Basis of Selection

An important step in revitalizing community committees in those counties where they are inactive is to secure the election of active farmers to the committes, willing to perform their responsibilities in a conscientious manner. They should be given every opportunity to grow in knowledge and experience, and should be retained as long as their neighbors elect them.

If the committees are given increased status, responsibility, training, a constant flow of information about the purposes and provisions of the programs, and opportunity to suggest improvements, farmers who are able and willing to accept positions of public trust will accept service on the committees.

b. Change in the Method of Election

Another important step in revitalizing the community committees is to make the election more democratic and more representative.

The candidates should be selected by the incumbent community committee acting as a group, and without outside influence. Partisan political considerations should not enter into the selection process. In addition, the county committee should have the right to add to the list of nominees the names of incumbent community committeemen. This would prevent losing able persons who might think it improper to re-nominate themselves, yet are willing to serve.

There is a considerable variation among the States regarding participation in community committee elections. A major reason appears to be the method of election used. In all States, the elections should be by mail ballot. This type of election encourages more people to vote, and may make it more difficult for political and other organizations to dominate or influence the elections.

Every effort should be made to inform all eligible producers why the county needs community committeemen. They should be informed of tasks and responsibilities of the committees. It should be stressed that committeemen will often be called upon to exercise judgment which directly affects each farm in their respective communities.

The elections of community and county committeemen should be held at the same time to stimulate more interest through a concentrated effort, and to cut down on the costs of administering the elections.

Recommendation: Change the method of election:

a. Nomination of candidates for three-member community committees should be made by the incumbent community committees, who would prepare a list of six nominees, with the provision that additional nominations would be permitted by petitions signed by three eligible producers. Incumbent committeemen could be nominated for re-election. The county committee may add to the list of nominees any incumbent community committeemen who are willing to serve.

b. Nomination of candidates for one-member community committees should be made by the incumbent committeeman and alternate, who would prepare a list of four nominees; and additional nominations would be permitted by petitions signed by three eligible producers. Incumbent committeemen and alternates could be nominated for re-election. In the transition period, the incumbent three-member community committee would be responsible for the nominations of the list of candidates.

c. Community committee members should be elected for one-year terms by mail ballot by all eligible producers; the elections should be held at the same time as those for county committeemen.

C. COUNTY OFFICE MANAGER

The Study Committee feels that the county committee, to be effective, needs the help of the best county office manager that can be obtained. A well-managed office is essential both to supply the information needed by the committee to make wise policy decisions and to carry out the detailed work necessary to implement these decisions.

At the same time, the operations of the county office are an essential part of the nationwide administrative system of ASCS. County office personnel are responsible to the county committee, and in turn to the farmer fieldmen and State committees and the national ASCS offices for carrying out the provisions of existing laws, regulations, and instructions.

1. ROLE

The roles of the county committee and the county office manager revolve around each other, and tend to grow or decline together. The manager has a part in each of the four roles described above for the county committee: Supervision of county office operations, adjudication of cases under the committee's jurisdiction, advice to State committee and national office, and popularization of specialized information. In each of them he has the responsibility for compiling and furnishing to the committee the data needed for an informed decision. Much of this data comes from the day-to-day operations of the county office. However, the manager must also be alert to bring before the committee any additional matters that need their attention.

The manager also has a special role as the head of the county office and field staff. Because he hires them and supervises their work, he has a prominent role in the management of the office and field activities. In this role he is expected to exercise good judgment and is the focus of the day-to-day activities of county personnel.

Because the nature of his job makes him the custodian of the data and information on which the county operations are based, the manager also is in a key position to develop possible alternative courses of action, and to call these to the attention of the committee. At the request of the committee, he may also recommend a particular action and give the reasons for his recommendation. While it is the prerogative of the committee to make the decision on what course of action should be taken, a committee that does not ask for all the information and advice it can get from the manager is depriving itself of a basic source for sound decisions. The committee needs a good manager to do its job properly, and the manager needs a good committee to do an effective job.

2. DUTIES

The present ASCS regulations state that the duties of the county office manager are to

A. Execute the policies of the county committee and be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the county office;
B. Employ the personnel of the county office in accordance with standards and qualifications furnished by the State committee;
C. Employ personnel for and be responsible for supervising all field work;
D. Be responsible to the county committee for properly receiving, accounting for, and disposing of all funds, including negotiable instruments, and property coming into the custody of the county committee;

E. Serve as counsellor to the county convention chairman on election procedures;
F. Supervise, under the direction of the county committee, the activities of the community committees elected in the county;
G. Perform such other duties as may be assigned to him by the county committee; and
H. Serve as secretary to the county committee, unless the committee selects another employee or the county agricultural extension agent to serve. The manager shall serve as county committee treasurer or designate another employee to serve.

This list of duties makes it clear that the county office manager is in charge of the county office and of the field work in the county. He employs the personnel for these jobs and is responsible for supervising their work.

Under the direction of the county committee, the manager also supervises the activities of the community committeemen. This implies that the county committee, once it decides what should be done, should leave the implementation to the county office manager.

The manager also has the duty of serving as chief financial officer of the farm programs in the county. He is responsible to the county committee for receipt, proper accounting for, and proper disbursement of funds coming into custody of the county committee.

The duties also make it clear that in many matters the county office manager serves under the general direction of the county committee. He executes their policies, performs any special duties assigned by them, and is responsible to them for the operations of the county office and field personnel.

3. SELECTION AND TENURE

The Study Committee feels that if the county committee is to play an effective role in the administration of farm programs at the county level it must have adequate authority to see that the county office is operated at the highest possible level. Basic to this authority is the power to select the county office manager.

At the same time, the Study Committee is aware of the need to prevent the arbitrary employment of unqualified persons. County office managers should be selected on the basis of merit; they should have the necessary ability, education, experience, and character to qualify for the job. They should not be selected for their political affiliations or for humanitarian reasons. All candidates for the job of office managers should be carefully screened, and the mediocre ones should not be included on the roster of eligible persons. The roster should be prepared under the direction of the Secretary of Agriculture, and the county committees should appoint office managers from eligible persons on the roster.

The Study Committee feels strongly that in order to attract well-qualified recruits, the position of county office manager ought to be a part of a career service. It is also necessary to provide career patterns so that able managers could look forward to promotion to more challenging jobs.

Recommendation: 1. Continue the practice of county committee employing county office managers of their own choice.

2. Require that county office managers be appointed from a roster of qualified persons. The roster should be prepared under the direction of the Secretary of Agriculture according to merit principles. When a manager vacancy is to be filled, at least three eligible persons should be presented to the committee.

3. Every effort should be made to make the county office manager's job a part of the agricultural career service, with promotions available within the State, across State boundaries, and across agency lines.

4. TRAINING

Each State should have a continuing program of in-service training for county office managers, assistant managers, and chief clerks, and also a program for training candidates for jobs as county office managers. A number of the States now have such programs.

The aim should be to further the development of the county office manager as an administrator of farm programs, as an effective member of the committee-manager-county staff team, and as a member of the community.

These formal courses could be taught by State office training specialists and other personnel, with help from specialized experts who may be available from such sources as the State colleges and universities, and from the Washington staff of the Department of Agriculture. The responsibility for teaching county personnel also will result in better preparation of State personnel for their day-to-day jobs, and the training sessions will facilitate the interchange of information and ideas between the county and State levels.

In addition, provision should be made for periodic training meetings of shorter duration, perhaps one or two days at a time. These meetings should be attended by all county office managers and assistant office managers; some of the meetings should be held jointly with county committeemen, county chairmen, chief clerks or other personnel. They could be held on a district basis, with occasional State-wide meetings.

A permanent training program for county office managers would require a well thought-out plan designed to meet the needs of the managers. It would vary from State to State, because the training must start from the level already achieved by the incumbent managers.

Such a training program would be one of the most practical ways of upgrading the level of administration of farm programs at the county level and it would contribute to strengthening the county committee system.

Recommendation: Efforts should be made to recruit persons of the highest quality for the manager's job, and to provide appropriate pre- and in-service training.

D. ADMINISTRATION AT THE STATE LEVEL

The importance of the State committee in the ASCS administrative system can hardly be overstated. It is a crucial link between the Secretary of Agriculture and the county committees that put farm programs into effect. It plays an indispensable role in the integration of national policy with activity on the American farm.

The importance of the State committee and the administrative staff under its control is displayed in five principal ways:

(1) The State committee has a considerable authority to adjust basic farm policies to the special needs and demands of agricultural production within the State.

(2) It exercises delegated power to enforce law and regulations in cases of violation.

(3) It supervises county committees and reviews their more important actions.

(4) Its power to supervise and review is strengthened by authority to regulate the election of community and county committees and to discipline them for gross inadequacy or neglect of duty.

(5) It is a center of communication between the farmers of the State and the elected committees on the one hand, and the Secretary of Agriculture and the headquarters force of ASCS on the other.

1. Adjustment of Basic Farm Policies

The following examples will serve to illustrate the nature of authority to adjust farm policies which is vested in the State committee and its staff. They illustrate only; they do not mark the bounds of delegated authority.

(1) The regulations governing certain commodity programs require the State committee, within limits fixed in the regulations, to determine whether a portion of the State's total allotment shall be held in a State reserve, and if a reserve is established, to fix the distribution of that reserve among various categories of purpose which the committee approves. Thus, the Upland Cotton regulations name six categories of purpose, any or all of which the State committee may approve, including allotments to new farms and the adjustment of individual farm allotments to correct inequities and prevent hardships.

(2) Under the Feed Grain price support program, the State committee decides whether grain which is secured by a loan or purchase agreement may be stored in a bin or crib with grain which is not pledged for price support. The State committee also decides whether conditions prevailing in any area endanger the safety of grain in storage and, if they find that conditions warrant, may call the loans and require delivery of the commodity prior to the specified maturity date.

(3) Regulations applying to land diverted from production under the Feed Grain program list several "approved conservation uses" to which the land may be put. A closing paragraph empowers the State committee to approve additional uses which are not in conflict with other provisions of the law and regulations.

2. Enforcement of Law and Regulations

In some instances, the tough problem of securing compliance with statute or regulation goes to the State committee for initial determination. These actions are in addition to routine review of decisions made at the county level. Charges that a Conservation Reserve Contract has been violated illustrate. The charge is filed initially with the State committee. The State committee directs the appropriate county committee to investigate and make a report with its recommendations for action. The State committee conducts a hearing, makes such further investigations as it thinks necessary, determines whether a violation has occurred, and if the charges are sustained, fixes the amount of forfeiture or refund appropriate to the case.

3. Supervision and Review of County Committees

Regulations governing administration of the several acreage allotment and marketing quota programs contain many express provisions for routine review, by the State committee, of actions taken in the county office. This language (quoted from the regulations governing burley, flue-cured, and certain other types of tobacco) is approximated in the regulations relating to a number of commodities:

> All acreage allotments and yields... shall be reviewed by or on behalf of the State committee, and the State committee may revise or require revision of any determination made under specified sections of the regulations... no official notice of acreage allotment shall be mailed to a farm operator until such allotment has been approved by or on behalf of the State committee.

Routine review is also established for the findings of county committees that suit should be brought for collection of penalties assessed upon growers because of excess marketing, or that refund should be made because of overpayment of penalties. In each case, the State committee certifies the amount to be collected or repaid and issues the proper instructions to prosecuting official or to the Treasury Department.

The foregoing examples are illustrative only. The regulations of the Department of Agriculture are replete with express provisions for State approval of county action. In addition to provisions for routine review, the regulations permit the individual to take to the State committee for re-examination and judgment virtually any determination of the county committee which he feels is adverse to his interests. Finally, it ought to be said that day-to-day relations between State and county committees, at least in many States, are so close that few decisions of critical importance are made at the county level without a mail or telephone clearance with the State committee or one of its staff.

The foregoing relationships in the administration of farm programs are but one aspect of State supervision of operations in the county office. The Handbooks which are prepared in Washington to guide administration in the county are supplemented by requirements and instructions adopted by the State committee. The farmer fieldmen are agents of the State committee, observing the behavior of county committees and their staff, inquiring into the questionable act, giving advice, and generally interpreting administrative policy to local personnel. County committeemen and county managers are brought together in various ways with State committeemen and State administrative staff for improvement of common understanding. Training programs are prepared and administered under the direction of the State office.

4. Election and Discipline of Community and County Committees

The State committee has a considerable authority over the election of community and county committees. The regulations now in effect permit three different methods of choosing community committees; the State committee determines which shall be used. The State committee fixes dates for election of community committeemen and for the convention in

which county committeemen are chosen; settles election disputes; voids elections and convention choices on grounds of irregularity; and takes other actions essential for a truly democratic farmer control of the committee system at its foundation.

The State committee also bears responsibility for the discipline of elected committeemen when they reveal a clear unfitness for their office, or are guilty of inexcusable neglect of duty. The State committee may reprimand them, suspend them from duty, remove them from office, and take over the county's operations until a satisfactory committee has been chosen.

5. A Connecting Link Between Washington and the Farmer

Realization of the goals underlying national farm policy depends finally on cooperation of the nation's farmers. Successful administration of the several farm programs rests, ultimately, in the hands of the county and community committees, county managers, and others who work in the county office. County and community committeemen are responsible primarily to the farmers by whom they are elected. They can be replaced at the will of the farmers in the county.

But the Secretary of Agriculture answers to the President for the successes and failures of farm policies. He answers for a record of successes and failures which is made, in last analysis, by several thousand elected committeemen who do not, in law or in practice, answer directly to him. If the Secretary secures a high compliance with his goals in farm policy--with his interpretations of the controlling legislation and the commitments of the Administration currently in charge of the Government--he does it by attraction rather than by command. The State committee is the key to any success he is destined to enjoy.

The Secretary of Agriculture appoints the members of the State committee, and he can remove them at his pleasure. He can assure himself that the State committeemen understand his position, where the law permits a choice of position. He can, by careful selection, appoint committeemen who sympathize with his views and who will devote themselves to the fulfillment of his objectives. He can secure their full support, as they are subject to sanctions that assure compliance or surrender of the office to other hands.

But, at the same time, the State committeemen are themselves members of the farm community. They are trusted by farmers because they share the interests of the farmers. Indeed, if the Secretary has selected wisely, many of the State committeemen will be widely known as agricultural leaders.

The State committee stands at a point of junction. The committeemen are a part of the administrative structure which the Secretary of Agriculture commands. And they are rooted in the conditions and circumstances that give to the agriculture of the State its distinctive character and quality. Standing at this point of junction, the State committee connects the administrative structure in Washington with the farm-connected administration in county and local community.

The working relations of the State committee with county and community committees has already been mentioned. Similar relationships tie the State committee to the Department in Washington. The State committee and its staff does its work within limits fixed by remarkably detailed regulations and Handbooks issued in Washington. Printed requirements and instructions are interpreted, modified, and replaced in a steady flow of communication. Washington officials make frequent trips to State offices, and join with State officials in meeting challenges to administration. Area Directors, headquartered in Washington, have responsibility for general coordination of policy among all States in their assigned Area, and coordination of activity in a State with policy aims in Washington.

Finally, Washington reviews actions of the State committee as the State committee reviews acts at the county level. Some decisions move from State to headquarters for automatic

or routine review. Other decisions move to Washington on formal appeal by the farmer or other person who thinks the State committee allowed him less than he was entitled to.

6. The State Committee

The primary authority over farm programs within a State is the State committee. In ten States, it consists of five men; in two States there are four members; in all other States there are three. Six of the ten five-man committees are in the Southeast area.

State committeemen are appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture and serve at his pleasure. Under the regulations, the Chairman is only first among equals; he is not granted an executive authority to exercise on his personal judgment.

The role of State committeemen in the ASCS administrative system varies considerably from State to State. In some States, the State committee assumes a role approximating that of a board of directors. It meets only occasionally, it maintains a general supervision over the State Executive Director and staff, it makes major decisions involving policy, and it is a quasi-judicial board. This is the case generally practiced in the Southeast and Southwest Areas. In other States, the members of the State committee devote more time to their office, and meet together several times each month as a committee to make decisions and issue instructions. This practice is most pronounced in the Midwest area.

There are a few States where the State committee has delegated a general management authority to the Chairman. Where this has been done, the Chairman is, in effect, the State's chief executive officer.

Members of the Study Committee and its Staff Director visited fifteen State offices, talked with State committeemen and their staff, sat in meetings in which staff reported to the Committee, and generally observed work going on. In at least twenty States, we talked with county and community committeemen about their State committeemen, State office personnel, and the guidance and assistance which the State office gives to people at county and community level.

On the basis of these and other face to face contacts, the Study Committee concludes that, with limited exceptions, current members of State committees are competent, experienced in farm operations and affairs, and diligent in their efforts to secure effective administration of farm programs. Some, apparently, do not appreciate the significance of their position. Nor do they recognize the contributions in thought and time which they must make if the objectives of farm programs are to be fully and equitably realized.

The State committee should be the point of strength, if the goals of farm programs are to be attained.

Recommendation: Membership on State committees is a high honor and responsibility, and only persons of appropriately high competence should be appointed to State committees.

It is of highest importance that the State committee not be the arm of a political party, and that it not give the appearance of serving a political party.

The farmers of any State are divided in their affiliations with the two major parties. Those affiliated with either party should never have cause to feel that they are out of favor with the administration of farm programs in that State. No part of the farm population should ever be given reason to suppose that its identification with the winning side in an election can be converted into a claim for special advantage.

The Study Committee was deeply concerned about the reports that individuals named to State committees in prior years were nominated through partisan process, and not selected in the first instance by the Secretary of Agriculture. Responsible men who are in a position

to observe report that confidence of farmers in the integrity of ASCS operations has been hurt in some States by common talk about political appointments. Members of the Study Committee encountered evidence that this is the case. There is today an unsettling apprehension that partisan politics may infiltrate the farmer committee structure at any time in the future. Fears and suspicions of this character ought not be allowed to flourish.

Party service alone should not be considered a qualification for service on the State committee. Pressures to appoint for political reasons must be withstood more firmly than in the past. There should be a policy, widely publicized and staunchly adhered to in practice, of filling places on the State committee with men who have served with distinction on county committees or elsewhere in ASCS, or have had other similar qualifying experience.

Disregard of party affiliation of appointees to the State committee should not handicap the Secretary in his search for good men. The State committee is an agent of the Secretary of Agriculture and it should reflect his views as to how farm programs should be developed and put into effect. The Secretary may rightly expect that State committeemen will sympathize with his goals and enthusiastically further his aims in the modification of policy and elaboration of policy within the limits fixed by the law. There is no reason to doubt that, in every State, he can find able and experienced farmers who meet this test regardless of party affiliation.

Recommendation: Appointments of State committeemen should be made without regard to party affiliation. Resist all pressures for appointment of men who are not fully qualified for outstanding service on the State committee; where possible, fill such positions with men who have had a substantial experience on a county committee or elsewhere in ASCS; above all, choose men who are devoted to the realization of the aims which underlie the programs they are to administer.

The Study Committee believes that a five-man State committee would be preferable in more States. But the Committee does not want to contribute to inflexibility in the system. Therefore, it recommends continuation of the present optional system of either five or three members.

The Study Committee believes that a five-man State committee provides a better representation of the different agricultural interests of the State. In most of the States, there is a great diversity in agricultural production and in other aspects of farm life to which the farm programs are relevant.

Akin to the advantages in the fuller representation of primary agricultural interests are the gains which accrue in some States from a more adequate representation of different geographic regions.

Furthermore, enlargement of the State committee might counteract the inclination of committee members to engage in administrative activities that ought to be assigned to administrative staff.

The distribution of duties and responsibilities between State committee, Executive Director, and other personnel in the State office varies from one part of the country to another. Where farm programs are being vigorously and efficiently carried out, the organization which gets these results ought not be disturbed. But there is some reason to believe that administration suffers when members of the State committee attempt to do the kind of work that can safely be entrusted to an executive officer.

Recommendation: State committees, as at present, should be composed of either three or five members.

The State Director of Extension is now a voting member of the State committee. Some Directors take a lively interest in farm programs administration and make helpful contributions. Others take little interest and rarely attend State committee meetings. No embarrassment occurs where the Director does not actively participate. It appears, therefore, that more is to be gained by continuing the ex officio membership than by terminating it. There appears to be no good reason, however, for continuing to give him a vote in the committee's determinations. Because of other demands on his time, he is often unable to make the administration of farm programs a central point of concern. In some States, the Director now abstains from voting. In other States, he sends a substitute who is not legally entitled to vote. Earlier reasons for allowing the Director to vote are now less cogent.

At the same time, improvements in coordination of ASCS and Extension Service activities ought to take place at the State level. Such coordination should result in better communication with the farmers.

Recommendation: Continue the State Director of Extension as an ex officio member of the State committee but without voting right.

State committeemen encounter, in some instances, opposition to the farm programs which Congress has established. They need every support the Secretary of Agriculture and the Administrator of ASCS can give them. They are entitled to the advice and assistance of a competent, experienced, and sympathetic Area Director. They should be encouraged to cross State lines to study the experience of committees in other States. They should be relieved of arbitrary restrictions which prevent them from giving to the programs they administer the time and the study that their importance to the American farmer tells us they deserve.

Recommendation: Give State committeemen vigorous support in their effort to achieve the objectives of farm programs; and remove all unwarranted restrictions which hamper their efforts.

7. The State Executive Director

There is a striking unevenness in the quality of men who have served as State Executive Directors in recent years. Difference in conception of what the Executive Director ought to do accounts for some of the difference in quality, but by no means for all of it. Testimony which must be credited asserts that too many times considerations other than devotion to the objectives of farm programs and competence in administration have figured heavily in the appointment.

This office must not be allowed to fall into second class hands. Too much is at stake. The Executive Director ordinarily has under his direction in a major agricultural State, 20 to 25 specialized personnel in the State headquarters and from 9 to 12 farmer-fieldmen. But this is less a true measure of his responsibilities than another job which only he can do-- the establishment and maintenance of a mutually stimulating and harmonious relationship between the members of the State committee and men and women who work for them. The attention and thought of the committee members is needed for adjustment of farm programs to State needs, for review of critical problems which have implications running beyond the bounds of a single county, and for other matters suggested above. The committee can discharge its obligations well only if there is an easy communication between committee on the one hand, and the program specialists, performance reviewers, and farmer fieldmen on the other. The Executive Director connects these two sectors of the organization and manages the relationships which unite the two parts into an effective instrument of national policy. The man who assumes this role must be a man of firm purpose but receptive mind, a man who can bring negotiating skill to the service of high standards.

At present, the State committee appoints the Executive Director with the approval of the Secretary of Agriculture. The Study Committee believes it will be better if the Secretary

appoints the Executive Director with the concurrence of the State committee. The Committee does not believe that the position should be placed in the federal classified civil service at this time.

The Secretary of Agriculture should be given maximum assurance that the administration of farm programs at the State level is in the hands of men in whom he has greatest confidence. Acknowledging that the Secretary appoints the State committeemen and has confidence in their judgment, the Study Committee believes that something will be gained if he exercises a more forceful influence in the selection of the Executive Director. The Secretary concedes enough to the State committeemen if he takes care to select a man with whom they can have agreeable working relations.

If the Secretary appoints the Executive Director, it will be possible for him to move experienced and competent men from one State to another. This is a development to be desired. Some allowance should be made for long association with the farm life of the State in selecting an Executive Director. But far more important than this are the right personal qualities, sound understanding of the dominant types of agriculture in the State, and thorough acquaintance with ASCS purposes and practices. Often this combination of qualities can be found in a neighboring State when it fails to turn up in the State where a vacancy occurs.

Recommendation: 1. The Executive Director should be appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture with the concurrence of the State committee. Men of outstanding quality should be sought for the position, going outside the State for the right man when necessary.

2. On the job, the State Executive Director should be charged with active direction of the day-to-day operations of the office.

8. The Farmer Fieldmen

There is a need for improving the quality and the performance of farmer fieldmen. The weakest of them, in personal qualities, fall too far below the best of them. In some instances, this has been the result of partisan rather than merit appointments. In some States, it appears they are not well trained for their duties. The Study Committee believes that in too many cases their inspection-investigation duties have not been properly balanced with their responsibilities to advise and instruct the people they work with in county offices.

The Committee does not recommend that the farmer fieldmen be put in the classified civil service. But it does strongly recommend that merit principles be applied in selecting them, and that they be given every opportunity to advance in a career service. If this goal is to be achieved, Washington must supply more stimulus, guidance, and assistance than appears to have been given in the past. Rosters should be prepared, made up to the fullest extent possible with names of persons who have proven their devotion and their competence in the service of ASCS at community, county or State level. Experience in farm programs has advanced to the point where it should be possible for men who have proven their merit to move to another State where more extensive agricultural production presents stiffer challenges and greater opportunities.

Recommendation: Merit principles should govern the selection, promotion, and transfer of farmer fieldmen. To this end:

a. Farmer fieldmen should be appointed by the State committee from a roster of qualified persons submitted by the Secretary of Agriculture.

b. Previous service on State or county committee, or as county office manager, or in a responsible position in the State ASCS office should be a major requirement for appointment to the position of farmer fieldman.

c. Provision should be made for compensation, promotion, and transfer of fieldmen in accordance with the best traditions of a career service; and an effort should be made to win proper recognition of their experience as qualification for positions in the federal classified civil service.

The effective farmer fieldman makes a first-order contribution to the success of farm policy. He is an ambassador, interpreting the policies of Washington and the State committee to the counties, and confronting the State committee with the problems that proliferate at local levels. He is a bearer of standards, for he tells the laggard counties what another county has proven to be possible. He is an advisor and an instructor, bringing his broader experience to the novel situation and the hard problem. Where approval by the State office is routine requirement, the fieldman sees that the documents are in order and initials them. In some matters, his judgment is called for, and the county acts according to his judgment.

These duties and responsibilities seem to be part of one package. The farmer fieldman has another assignment of notably different character. He is an auditor and an inspector. He is supposed to detect the carelessness and the errors which, uncorrected, work an injury to the farmer, and which, allowed to continue, destroy confidence in the integrity of a county's operations. This is a duty which can occupy nearly all of a fieldman's time. Failure to detect and report an irregularity readily invites reprimand or discipline. Failure to inspire and instruct the county personnel is not so easily observed. As a consequence, the cautious fieldman tends to give too much of his time to his job as inspector and auditor.

On the basis of interviews with fieldmen, with men in State offices, and especially with county committeemen and county managers, the Study Committee believes that too many fieldmen err too much in the way they distribute their attention. They devote so much time to examination of records, that they have far too little time left for raising the sights of county committeemen, building up their confidence, and showing them how to avoid embarrassment by doing things right. A better balance in distribution of the fieldman's time, of course, should be one of the basic objectives at the State level of administration.

Recommendation: The assignment of duties to the farmer fieldman and his training should put a heavy emphasis on his service as advisor, instructor, and bearer of experience to county committees and their staffs.

9. Direction and Control of State and County Operations

The provision for the State committee and its Executive Director to maintain continuous supervision over the activities of the several counties in the State is soundly conceived. The Study Committee recommends only that these provisions be augmented at certain points, and that they be more diligently administered.

There are two shortcomings in the present provisions for dealing with a breakdown in the farmer committee system:

1. It is not sufficiently clear that the Secretary of Agriculture can take necessary corrective action in his own right.

2. The remedies which are provided for are not sufficiently fitted to the needs.

Where advice, persuasion, and assistance do not bring a county's operations to a satisfactory standard, the Secretary should be able to take that measure of corrective action which the realities of the situation demand. Ordinarily, he should act, as he now does, through the authority of the State committee. But situations must be anticipated in which the State committee is a contributor to the deficiency or, more probably the case, not sufficiently alert to the need for correcting the deficiency. The Secretary of

Agriculture, it must always be remembered, answers to Congress, President, and the nation for the acts of elected farmer committees which he does not appoint. He cannot answer, in a true sense, for the acts of an elected committee unless he can induce them to do, or do for them, what they have an obligation to do.

At present, the available remedies are not well suited to the deficiencies which experience shows to occur from time to time at the county level. Where reprimand and persuasion do not succeed, suspension and removal are the next corrective remedies. Suspension and removal are last resort measures. They amputate the arm to remove a tumor. The tumor ought not be allowed to grow until removal of an arm becomes inescapable. In the Study Committee's judgment, there should be available for dealing with the recalcitrant elected committee, a procedure comparable to a receivership. If the farm community has not, through its power to elect, created a responsible committee, or if the committee will not admit and respect its responsibilities—in such a case the Secretary of Agriculture should have unquestioned authority to put the county office under the management of a person he trusts. Suspension of county committeemen or the county office manager may not be required, because it may be that instruction and demonstration are what is needed to bring them to recognition of their obligations. It may be that the farm community needs both education and demonstration—an informational campaign which secures a fuller appreciation of their role in the choice of committeemen, and a demonstration of the kind of service they have a right to expect in the county office.

Disciplinary action should always be resorted to with great caution, and the Secretary should always act through an official in whom he has highest confidence.

It may be that some decisions which ought, as a rule, to be made in the county office, should be lifted out of the hands of certain county committees and placed in the State committee. This may be done because the problem is too big for the county or the county committee is reluctant to handle it.

Recommendation: The Secretary of Agriculture should make vigorous use of his present powers and should seek such additional authority as may be needed to avoid breakdowns and to correct failures in the ASC operations at the State and county level.

a. He should be able to take over a county ASC operation when the local situation has notably deteriorated, putting a person of his choice in charge with full authority to carry on all the activities (with or without a county committee), and keeping him there until the Secretary is of the opinion that farmers in the county will police the committee operation.

b. He should be able to raise from county to State level the administration of any aspect of a program which, in his judgment, a county cannot adequately administer.

Certain decisions and acts of county and State committees now come to Washington for approval. This reinforces confidence that errors of great price will not occur. It is timely for responsible officials in Washington, in collaboration with State and county committeemen, to see if additional crucial decisions and acts ought to be taken to higher levels for approval.

Recommendation: The Department of Agriculture should study all programs with a view to requiring approval in Washington of those critical decisions which experience shows cannot be safely left for final decision at the State level.

The Study Committee believes that there are excessive delays in effective administration of farm programs in cases requiring court action. Cases of fraudulent action arising from farmer participation in programs are referred to a Regional Office of the General Counsel of the Department of Agriculture, and then to a federal District Attorney. Prolonged delays, ranging from six months to a year or more, keep both the farmer involved and the ASCS administrative personnel in a position of uncertainty for too long. This is

harmful to the reputation of the programs themselves. The Office of the General Counsel and the Department of Justice should give careful attention to such excessive delays and attempt to reduce "red tape" by expediting legal procedure wherever possible.

Recommendation: The Secretary should take vigorous measures to expedite legal action on cases involving alleged infractions of law and regulations by farmers, seeking avoidance of delay to the extent possible.

E. THE COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM

The communications network in which the farmer committees are involved presents five main aspects:

(a) Relationships between the committees and those who work for them on the one hand, and the farmers and other members of the public on the other;

(b) Relationships which tie together the several committees of a State;

(c) The basic statements of policy issued in Washington (and supplemented by the State committee) which place authority in the committees and regulate their activities;

(d) The day-to-day movement of ideas, queries, instructions and other messages between the committees and Washington; and

(e) The movement, within the headquarters organization, of things (policies, decisions, etc.) which affect the administration of farm programs in the field.

The assignment given the Study Committee did not include the first and the last of these categories. However, the field trips which were made by Committee members enabled them to observe what goes on in the county office. Everywhere the Committee members saw evidences of easy, friendly, informal relationships. The county committee and its office force seem to be incorporated into the life of the farm community.

The second category of relationships is treated in other places in this Report--the aid which the community committeemen give to the county committee; the relationships between State and county committee; the special role of the farmer fieldman; and the special need for training.

There remain to be considered the communication of basic policy (the Handbooks and the Regulations) and the two-way movement of ideas, queries, and instructions between Washington and the State and county committees.

The Committee has been informed that the Administrator of ASCS is now engaged in a thorough and critical re-evaluation of every aspect of ASCS communications process. For this, he is to be warmly commended. The inquiry is in the hands of men who are not themselves involved in the network they study. It may be that objectivity should be further secured by submitting the recommendations and proposed actions which come out of the study to competent critics who are wholly removed from service in the Department of Agriculture.

1. The Handbooks

The report supplied to the Study Committee shows that ASCS has prepared 60 handbooks to guide activities in county offices. These 60 handbooks and 55 more (a total of 115) go to State offices. No county office has use for all of the county series. Perhaps every county office has more than 40 of them on its shelves.

These Handbooks set forth the authority and responsibilities of State, county and community committees, and supply instructions as to how committees and their employees shall do their work. Specification of detail makes frequent amendment necessary.

Members of the Study Committee and the Staff Director interviewed a great many county committeemen and office managers. Virtually every one of them remarked on the volume of requirements and instructions contained in the Handbooks, and testified to inability to keep abreast of their contents. Farmer fieldmen, State committee members, and not a few persons employed in Washington advised the Committee that regulation by Handbook has been overdone.

The contents of the several Handbooks reflect the Department's policy in respect to placement of authority. They do not, in the main, tell the committee what considerations must be taken into account in deciding a question; instead, they tell the committee what the decision must be. Rather than admonish the committee to approach its tasks with respect for orderly procedures and an eye for avoiding trouble, the Handbooks specify, step by step, the way county committees and their employees shall do everything they are authorized to do.

The Study Committee appreciates the value considerations which lead men in Washington to establish control on men who make decisions in the field. The ideal of a uniform application of the law is a worthy ideal. Men ought to be stayed from making the egregious error. It is natural for superior officers to shore up against the well-meaning departures from fixed policy which causes auditors to tie up funds. But enthusiasm directed to the realization of these values must be modified by recognition that they come at the cost of other values. Knowledge is not complete enough for men in Washington to foresee all the exigencies that arise in the field. There is need for the thoughtful judgment of men who enjoy the community's confidence in the application of national policies.

This Committee is in no position to say at what points and to what extent the regulations which blanket the county committee ought to be relaxed. There is a natural tendency in all large organizations to carry directions and instructions to the point where rigidity supplants flexibility. It is a tendency which responsible officials must always be alert to combat.

Recommendation: Study all Handbooks with a view to relaxing restrictions and requirements in respect to all matters on which the judgment of elected committeemen can be utilized effectively.

Activities at the State level are not so strictly regulated by instructions issued in Washington. There is less occasion to do so. The members of the State committee are the Secretary's appointees, not the choice of farmers as is the case of county committees. The State committee and its Executive Director are more accessible to Washington by telephone and personal visitation. The Area Director maintains a continuous liaison between the State office and the officials in Washington who bear responsibility for the success of programs which State and county officials administer.

Members of the Study Committee inquired into the adequacy of authority at the State level in the course of visits to nearly a dozen State offices. Later, six of the more experienced and successful State Chairmen were invited to Washington to discuss this question with members of the Study Committee. Testimony obtained in these ways supports a conclusion that adjustment of national policy to widely varying conditions is not hindered by undue restrictions on the authority of State committees. Members of the Study Committee were struck, however, by the admission of some State Chairmen that they ignore certain of the Department's regulations or render a requirement innocuous by liberal interpretation. Surely, it would be better for the integrity of the Department's relations with the State committees if requirements were stated in such a way that there is minimum occasion to ask for an exception and never an excuse for ignoring a requirement.

Recommendation: Review all instructions to State committees and the requirements which are imposed on them with a view to reducing the necessity for exceptions.

2. The Departmental Regulations.

The assignment given the Study Committee did not include a critique of the Regulations which elaborate the provisions of farm programs and constitute the authoritative statement of the policies which originate in the discretion granted to the Secretary of Agriculture. They cannot be wholly ignored in this Report, however, for they are the foundation of all the Handbooks which control action on State and county level of administration.

The departmental Regulations are printed in the Federal Register, and reprinted in the Code of Federal Regulations. They have the force and effect of law. As a result, there can be no departure from or relaxation of their requirements in the instructions which are entered in the Handbooks. Any significant relaxations of Handbooks' requirements which unduly restrict the discretion of State and county committees will have to be preceded, therefore, by modification of language in the Regulations.

The Study Committee is of the opinion that the Regulations contain a great amount of material that ought not to have the effect of law. They do more than fix the rights and obligations of persons who are affected by farm policies. To an undue degree, they distribute duties and responsibilities within the administrative structure and describe the manner in which the work shall be carried out. As a consequence, they make mandatory in all States and counties a number of practices that ought to vary according to the judgment of experienced administrative officials.

Rules and regulations which have the force and effect of law ought to have a quality of permanence. Lawyers and other persons who look to them for guidance ought to have a high confidence that they know their contents. Regulations relating to farm programs often need revision because of the frequency of change in the programs authorized by law. This unavoidable factor of change ought not be augmented by a compulsion to revise the Code of Federal Regulations everytime experience calls for a change in work assignments or office procedures.

There are other features of the departmental Regulations which appear to be anomalous. In some instances, the rights and obligations of individuals are not clearly stated but emerge from language which describes the method by which rights and obligations shall be determined. Provisions which properly belong in a declaration of legal obligation sometimes are extended by explanations and illustrations. Statements that purport to be definitions frequently prove, on reading, to have a regulatory effect. Considerations of this sort re-enforce the Committee's conclusion that there is critical need for a thorough and severe re-examination of all the Regulations which give legal effect to farm programs and control their administration.

Recommendation: Subject departmental Regulations to severe re-examination, seeking clarification of language, relaxation of requirments which unduly restrict the discretion of State and county committees, and removal of all content which ought not have the force and effect of law.

3. Communication between Washington and the Field.

In a day of typewriter and telephone, the prompt movement of ideas is not a problem. The problem is one of initiation and reception.

Messages move in great volume and with dispatch, both ways, between ASCS headquarters in Washington and the State and county committees scattered about the country. The thing to be concerned about is whether men with ideas get a hearing, whether questions that require an answer get to the man who can give an authoritative answer, whether advice gets on its way before the error is made. The thing to be concerned about is even more than initiation and reception; it is a matter of climate or atmosphere. At the bottom, the problem is one of the receptiveness of ASCS, as a system, to ideas; the readiness of men to

seek advice before they act; the concern of men to see the whole problem before they tell other men how to solve the problem.

The Study Committee believes that ASCS in fixing administrative policies and procedures should be more receptive to lessons from experience in the field. On-the-ground experience is not sufficiently utilized in making new procedures and revising old ones. The Committee made this a point of inquiry in interviews with State and county committees, Area Directors, and a number of officials in Washington. Many of the deficiencies of Handbooks, Regulations, and forms would be removed if men who have good knowledge of administration at State and county levels as well as intimate contact with the production, storing, and marketing of agricultural products participated more actively in their preparation.

Wise development and effective administration of farm programs can be accomplished only by close, cordial and continuous cooperation between men with an overview of nationwide needs on the one hand, and men with intimate understanding of the State and county realities of agricultural industry on the other. Ideas must flow up as surely as instructions move down.

Recommendation: Knowledgeable State and county ASCS personnel, including Area Directors and people in the field, should be brought more actively into the formulation of the Department's administrative policies and procedures.

The achievement of orderly relations between specialists in Washington headquarters and men responsible for administration in the field is a perplexing one in all large organizations. Different arrangements and methods have been tried during the existence of the farmer committee system. The Study Committee has not made the inquiry which would enable it to say whether the present organization and methods should be continued or changed.

The Committee feels that the success of the present organization and methods depends in very large measure on the competence and the knowledge of the five Area Directors and the small staff in their offices. To bring order into relations between Washington specialists and State and county personnel, the Area Director must have a considerable familiarity with all of the farm programs that are important to the States assigned to him. His knowledge must be supplemented by that of two or three assistants who have a more specialized understanding of particular programs. The Area office need not rival the commodity division in expertise. But the Area Director and the men under him do need to know enough about the various farm programs to answer the routine question and to recognize at once when a high level of special knowledge must be brought to a problem. They must know enough about a wide range of problems to bring to the making of administrative policies and procedures that quality of practical understanding which is needed in the development of sound relationship with the people in the field.

If the task of the Area Director were only to do these things, it would not be especially hard to find men who meet the requirements for the job. But the Area Director is more than a broker of knowledge and a coordinator of communication. In certain matters, he is in a direct line of command. He is charged with overseeing the housekeeping and management activities of State and county committees. If interest, attention, and performance in a State or part of a State fall below required standards, the Area Director is expected to be the first to hear about it and is counted on to find a remedy for it.

Finally, the Area Director is eyes, ears, and voice for the Secretary of Agriculture and the Administrator of ASCS in dealing with the greater environment in which the State, county and community committees are placed. He carries the burden of finding the right men for places on State committees, and inquires into their acceptability to different groups that maintain an interest in farm programs. If the Secretary appoints the State Executive Director in the future, these demands on the skill of the Area Director will increase.

The position of Area Director must be filled with great care. At the outset, the Area Director must be familiarized with the wide range of problems which currently affect administration. Once at ease in his duties, he must be brought actively into the process of policy making. To do less than this would be to miss a prime opportunity to unite in one coordinated enterprise, the broad view of men at the top of the organization and the sensitive perceptions of men who live where farm programs have their effect.

Recommendation: The position of Area Director is of crucial importance and must be filled with great care.

F. USDA COUNTY COUNCILS

The Study Committee believes that there is a need to review the problem of coordinating the various programs of the Department of Agriculture on the county level. It is the Committee's opinion that the best means for a practical step toward coordination would be the establishment of county USDA councils in all major agricultural counties. Among the functions such councils could serve are the following:

1. They could promote the integration of the administrative and operational resources of the Department on the county level by providing a focal point for carrying out coordinated policies and programs.

2. They could re-establish, quicken, and expedite the unfiltered flow of upward reporting of local conditions directly to the Secretary, and give him and his staff an up-to-date and accurate picture of the problem areas in the totality of USDA field operations.

3. They could make it easier to use reports on local conditions in supplying members of Congress, leaders of farm organizations, media of mass communication, educational institutions, and others with timely information.

4. They could greatly enhance the position of agriculture in the United States.

In most counties, the council would be made up of representatives of ASCS, Cooperative Extension Service, Soil Conservation Service, and Farmers Home Administration. Each agency would be represented by two persons:

1. The fully employed administrative or executive official of the agency; and

2. The chairman of the farmer committee or advisory group.

Thus, each agency would be represented by a professional employee and by a farmer specifically interested in the services and function of that agency. In most instances, such a council would be composed of eight persons.

The members of the council would nominate two, three, or more men, not members of the council, to the Secretary of Agriculture as possible appointees to the post of chairman of the USDA council. The Secretary would not be obligated to appoint any of the nominees but, from such names, he could make a selection. Certainly such nominees, from outside of the specific agencies represented on the council, should be independent and impartial in their judgments and counsels. The very act of nomination by the eight men gives reasonable assurance that the nominees have these characteristics, and the Secretary would want men of such standing, men who command widespread confidence on the local level.

The chairman of the council would report directly to the Office of the Secretary and serve without pay.

Recommendation: 1. Review the problem of coordinating the programs of the Department of Agriculture on the county level.

2. Consider the feasibility of establishing USDA county councils made up of two representatives of each USDA agency and a chairman appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture from outside of the agencies. The chairman would report directly to the Office of the Secretary and serve without pay.

G. THE FARMER COMMITTEE SYSTEM IN THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN AGRICULTURE

The Study Committee believes that the farmer committee system should be strengthened, and that it should be kept in the hands of elected bona fide farmers. The Committee finds that there is widespread recognition among farmers and farm leaders of the importance of the farmer committee system in the future of American agriculture. Farmers' satisfaction with the administration of farm programs, and their participation in the programs, will continue to depend on the extent to which responsible State, county, and community committees are encouraged to play a vital role in this system of administration. It is not an overstatement to say that the position of agriculture in the United States can be greatly enhanced through continued emphasis on a vigorous and competent administration of farm programs.

The task of administration is not an easy one. Significant changes in all aspects of American agriculture have occurred since the administration of farm programs through the farmer committee system was inaugurated almost thirty years ago. These changes contributed to the weakening of the vigor, the drive, the sense of urgency, and the enthusiasm in some farmer communities and counties. The renewal and strengthening of the farmer committee system cannot be brought about merely by improving its structure. A change in the spirit governing the administration of farm programs is needed wherever it is below the mark of excellence. To give continuous encouragement to farmer-elected committees within a nationwide administrative organization will tax the ingenuity of the most able administrator. Yet it must be done if the full potentialities of the farmer committee system are to be realized.

Recommendation: The Department of Agriculture should carry on continuous study of farm programs administration on all levels, including the Washington headquarters.

H. MINORITY VIEWS

COMMENTS BY CHARLES F. BRANNAN ON THE REPORT OF THE STUDY COMMITTEE TO REVIEW THE FARMER COMMITTEE SYSTEM

This Study Group was requested to review all phases of the so-called "farmer elected committee system" and reach conclusions as to whether or not this unique administrative instrumentality is today administering the farm programs assigned to it by statutes and regulations as efficiently and effectively as may reasonably be expected; and, if not, what steps can and should be taken by the Secretary and recommended by him to the Congress to raise the performance of this very important administrative arm of the Department of Agriculture to a satisfactory level.

The Study Group was asked to assume that farm programs of the variety now being carried out by these committees will continue and will be expanded to include additional commodities, resulting in a future appreciable increase in the work and responsibilities of the committee system.

In Secretary Freeman's speech to the American Political Science Association on September 7, 1962, the Secretary recognized the farmer committee system to be unique among government administrative instrumentalities and that achieving the required standard of performance "through such a structure presents innumerable and difficult problems." "How do we reconcile problems that may arise when laws passed by the Congress of the United States are administered by farmers elected by their neighbors in a local community?" "How does the Secretary of Agriculture direct the activities of County Managers hired by elected county committees?" "How can we insure adequate two-way communication all the way down— and up—the line?" These and other concerns about the committee system were expressed by the Secretary. Thus, a cold, hard look at the method of selecting committeemen at the various levels, the scope and interdependence of their functions and the capacity of this system to absorb additional responsibilities was in order.

In a statement of the "problem" on page 5 of its Report, the Study Group "recognizes that the Secretary of Agriculture is made responsible by the Congress for the administration of federally authorized farm programs. The elected Farm Committees are not directly answerable to the Secretary." Such a governmental structure is contrary to accepted principles of management. It has no parallel in either public or private administration. Thus its justifications must be most persuasive. It should offer a very high degree of proficiency or substantial economy or like benefit to the whole nation.

If we assume that this unique administrative instrumentality performed reasonably well during its early years but is not currently reaching standards of performance which are essential if the programs, for which the Secretary of Agriculture is held accountable to the President and the Congress, are to achieve their goals, we must seek the causes of or explanation for this change. Are the causes to be found in the modern farm community? Are the demands of the far more complicated farm programs a contributing factor? Are there still other characteristics of present day agriculture to be sought out? I think all of these factors have had their effects.

During the years 1940 and earlier, all funds administered by the farmer committee system did not exceed one billion dollars. In recent years these committees administered programs involving, in the aggregate, as much as seven billion dollars. In 1940, there were 6,350,000 farms in the United States, most of them operated by the families who lived on them. This number has decreased to about 3,950,000 farms at the present time and a significant proportion of these are owned by large corporations representing large investments. The methods and manner in which authorized programs are applied to their operations demand that those responsible for these large operations take an active interest in the committees at both the county and State level. Twenty years ago farm programs generated limited controversy. Long range supply management was unheard of. In fact, many of these intervening years were devoted to increasing production for war or other national emergency. Today farm organizations and processors contest vigorously for widely divergent points of view about the type of farm programs, if any, that are needed and also about the techniques of their administration. Some groups are vigorously opposed to the programs. These groups actively participate in referendums which are handled by and through the committees and many do not overlook the importance of having on the county committees persons whose views coincide with their own. An inevitable by-product of this widespread and vital interest of farm organizations, processors and big corporate farmers is evidenced by a recent survey of the attitude of committeemen toward the programs.

This mailed survey, constituting a very representative sample, posed the question: What is your reaction to the present approach of the U. S. Department of Agriculture to farm problems? According to the staff analysis of the responses this "evidence suggests that 27% of the respondents are not in sympathy with the present approach of the Department." Thus, more than one-fourth of the men who administer the Price Stabilization and related programs of the Department of Agriculture and upon whose authority or decisions several billions of dollars of taxpayers' monies are expended annually are not in sympathy with the program they are administering. In fact, the survey shows that 12% of all county committeemen are opposed and an additional 2% very opposed. In my firm opinion, it is unrealistic to ask the Secretary of Agriculture to direct and manage programs of the current magnitude of the farm price stabilization programs by and through a field organization in which one "employee" out of four is not in sympathy with the program that employee has the responsibility to carry out in his county; and some 14% of whom are so firmly opposed that they openly and frankly so advise the Secretary's Study Group. It is to be noted that this frankness involves no risk for the Secretary did not appoint them and probably could not remove them for this cause. Noted also that the programs which are the subject of the survey are Congressional enactments. They are the law. Not some whim of the Secretary. Certainly, no private business executive would be asked to operate under such conditions. The student of this unique administrative instrumentality will recognize the desirable democratic characteristics inherent in the farmer elected committees. But he may also properly ask if such affirmative advantages balance out the obvious disadvantages. The democratically elected Congress, usually after another very laborious democratic process, adopts the programs. The executive branch of government, the President and chief officer of which was also democratically elected, prepared and issued the regulations to implement the programs authorized by the Congress. But one-fourth of the persons who have been elected by another local democratic process to put the programs in force and effect in a particular political subdivision are not in sympathy with and many are openly opposed to the programs. This is, indeed, a unique administrative instrumentality. To expect such a facility to operate at acceptable efficiency under the impact of presently clashing views of the interested parties, taxes the credulity of the thoughtful student of human nature. In fact, if this is a sound administrative mechanism for a federal program which is expending vast sums of public money, why is it not equally applicable to federal programs which collect that money. Many a taxpayer should welcome the opportunity to elect the I. R. S. agent for his community.

For these reasons, I dissent from the Study Group's position that the Secretary continue to be denied the normal, usual and necessary employer-employee relationship with county committeemen. If, in order to create this essential employer-employee relationship, it is necessary to vest in the Secretary the power to appoint directly one or all of the committeemen, or appoint from a list or panel of farmers democratically selected by their neighbors, then I believe the somewhat exaggerated benefits which flow from the present election process must yield.

County Office Managers.

I submit that it is reasonable to assume that if more than one-fourth of all committeemen are not in sympathy with the programs they are administering, then about the same percentage of the County Office Managers are not in sympathy with such programs, and that the attitudes of the clerical and similar help in the county offices may be similarly characterized.

The Office Manager is chosen by the county committees to serve at the will of the county committee. Unless he is persona grata to at least two of the committeemen he may lose his job. In fact, the relationship between the County Office Manager and at least two of his committeemen in some counties goes much deeper than this for the County Office Manager in many cases must also be the successful campaign manager for at least two of the county committee in order to be appointed or re-appointed.

It is for this reason that I dissent from the recommendation of the Study Group that the appointment of the County Office Manager be left to the discretion of the county committee. On the contrary, this person, who directly maintains the records and is responsible for the voluminous clerical functions concerning the outflow of a portion of several billion of dollars annually, should be very closely integrated into the Department of Agriculture with all the status, benefits and responsibilities of other Department employees. There should be a well defined channel for delegation of responsibility and for the free flow in both directions of information, advice and instruction.

If the Secretary be accountable for proper application of federal funds and the equitable application of the law and the regulations, he is entitled to have someone at each of the some 3,000 points of application who is directly responsible to him through usual and normal administrative channels.

Community Committees.

I dissent from the Study Group's conclusion that commensurate public benefit can be obtained by the expenditure of the large amount of money necessary to renew, reinvigorate and strengthen the community committees.

The one fixed responsibility of the community committeeman is to annually participate in the election of the county committee. Beyond this, his function is to become informed about the objectives and provisions of the programs and convey this information to his fellow farmers in the community.

In today's plethora of modern communication devices in rural areas, such as telephone, radio, television, numerous local and national publications, and improved mail facilities, the County and State Committees have far more economical and efficient means of reaching all of the farmers of any particular community.

The costs involved in educating one man in a community so that he may pass on his knowledge to the balance of the community is a waste of administrative funds. With the

same amount of money as would be required to revitalize and train one community committeeman in every community, all of the farmers who desire to be advised about the programs can be very adequately exposed to the necessary information.

The existence today of fine roads and highways and automobiles makes it not only possible but convenient for farmers to go to the county office when they have an especially difficult problem to resolve. Furthermore, the likelihood that such a problem could be resolved in a discussion with the community committeeman is remote even if he could be reached in less time than it would take to go to the county office. Nor should it be expected that a community committeeman can afford the time to be broadly, accurately and currently informed upon the multiple and, in some cases necessarily, complicated aspects of modern day farm programs.

Conclusion:

The Study Group recognized "that there are weaknesses in the present system." (Page 2.) It also "found no alternative system of administration of farm programs which has the support of farmers." Hence, the Study Group has contented itself with minor revisions in the existing method of constituting and operating the committee system. For the most part, these recommendations of procedural changes are valid and useful as far as they go. However, these recommendations will not end or overcome the substantial performance failure of the presently constituted ASC committees; nor would they transform the ASC committee system into an effective instrument and arm of the Department of Agriculture and of the Secretary for implementing the programs authorized by the Congress.

On the contrary, the entire administrative structure of the federal and all of the State governments testify to the desirability of establishing an employer-employee relationship with county committees and County Office Managers as recommended in this dissent.

SEPARATE STATEMENT BY MORTON GRODZINS

I have been honored by membership on this committee, and I have profited enormously from association with its distinguished members. It is therefore a matter of regret that I find myself compelled to submit this separate statement. There seems to be no doubt that the committee's recommendations, taken as a whole, would produce a considerable improvement in the State and county administration of ASC programs. The explanatory text in the report, however, does not do justice to the content of the recommendations. More than that, the report in my view is deficient in not looking deeper into many issues and in considering only the immediate future. It will be seen in what follows that I have serious disagreement with some of the committee's recommendations for immediate action. But I diverge even more sharply from the committee in assigning certain values to the ASC committee system and therefore in assigning reasons for certain recommendations. Finally, I have in my note tried to add a time dimension that is absent in the majority report.

The comments that follow are critical of the ASC committee system. They are not in any way critical of the present administration of the Department of Agriculture. The committee system is the product of the great economic crisis of the depression and almost thirty years of subsequent history. It has been shaped by the several power centers within the Department of Agriculture, by the Congress, its committees and subcommittees, and by the internecine warfare among farmers and farm organizations. To use my remarks on the present status of the committee system to criticize the Secretary of Agriculture would be, therefore, to misuse them. On the contrary, it seems to me that he deserves high praise for charging this study group, and every member of it, to look hard and critically at the administrative machinery he has inherited.

The majority report assumes the ASC county and community committees are an unqualified good. Their deficiencies are minor and readily corrected. The committees, in the majority view, exemplify grass roots democracy at its best: elected neighbors serving neighbors, local control avoiding the evils of a national bureaucracy. In fact, however, the virtues of the committee system are by no means unambiguous.

Counting only committee members and ignoring their elected alternates and the employees in county offices, the 3,000 county and 26,500 community committees involve some 90,000 rural dwellers. All of them are paid, although most of them not very much. They are paid not only to administer farm programs. They are also expected to support and promote those programs. (The promotional activities of the committees are discussed in the majority report under the awkward euphemism, "Popularization of Specialized Information.") Committees are inundated with instructions from Washington and State headquarters, they are jacked up by weekly visits from commodity specialists and farmer fieldmen (the name given to regional supervisors), and they are urged to greater and more effective action in State and regional meetings. The democratic grass roots committee are in Washington spoken of as "federal instrumentalities." Democratic forms may camouflage central control. To the extent that Washington officials preserve the committees in order to mask central control, or make it more palatable, they are guilty of using democratic forms in an authoritarian manner.

Further, whatever may have been the case in the depression days of three decades ago, it is not true today that ASC elections are regarded as being of first importance by the farming communities. Fewer than 23 percent of the eligible voters participated in the election of community committees in 1961. Among the ten mid-western States, not one showed a turnout in excess of 15 percent. (In Illinois it was 4.8 percent.) In a significant

number of communities the number of people elected was as large as or larger than the number of people voting. Nor is it true that leading farmers take principal roles. Many community and county committees are the captives of superannuated veterans of the old agricultural wars, retained in their posts because of voter apathy plus their own efforts to insure for themselves some income and something to do.

If the committee system is something less than ideal as an exemplar of grass roots democracy, it also has obvious shortcomings as an administrative device. Supervision from Washington of the ASC programs is an altogether natural fact of administrative life. Programs handled by the ASC committees are taken together, the most expensive, domestic federal activity. The Secretary of Agriculture is by law charged with the effective expenditure of these funds. He would be grossly derelict in duty if he did not do everything within his power to see that the committees carry out their functions honestly and efficiently. But the attributes of grass roots democracy which are ascribed to the committees imply that they must have a considerable measure of freedom, including freedom from central control. Supervision that otherwise would be regarded as ordinary administrative prudence is, under the circumstances, often looked upon as evil, bureaucratic action. The logic of the committee system turns ordinary supervision into manipulation. This is an absurd burden for central administrators to bear. Yet if the Secretary took seriously the charges that he manipulated the committees and withdrew a considerable measure of the supervision given to them, he would surely not escape reprimand by forces in Congress (and the Bureau of the Budget and General Accounting Office). He would be guilty of slack administration, of unlawful administration of funds, of failing to exercise due diligence in meeting legislative objectives. In this matter, the Secretary is damned if he does and damned if he doesn't. So absurdity is compounded.

The ASC committee system has still other administrative defects. In a poll conducted by this study group, the county committee chairmen were asked:

> What is your reaction to the present approach of the U.S. Department of Agriculture to the farm problems?

The responses were:

29%	Very favorable
44%	Favorable
10%	Neutral
12%	Opposed
2%	Very opposed
3%	No response

A staff analysis of this question said:

> If we assume that those committeemen who are in sympathy with the Department's approach to the farm problem would not hesitate to mark their returns as "favorable" or "very favorable" then our evidence suggests that 27% of the respondents are not in sympathy with the present approach of the Department [i.e., the neutral responses must be counted among those not in sympathy with the Department]. They do not endorse the present Department's approach, even though they are not necessarily hostile toward administration of farm programs as authorized by law.

The remaining 73% of the respondents are an important part of the Department's "supporting force" in the counties across the nation.

It must be recalled that the county chairmen are the most important persons at the point of farmer contact in the ASC administration. They set the effectiveness and tone of the whole operation. Their expectations and standards determine how well, or poorly, county managers and office staffs will perform their tasks. Those looking for solace may find it in the fact that 73 percent of the county chairmen are a "supporting force" for ASC programs. Those concerned with efficiency — and with the Secretary's responsibility to Congress and the electorate as a whole — will be more impressed that one out of every four elected county chairmen is not in sympathy with the very programs he is charged by law with administering.

The character of the committees as instruments of grass roots democracy is prejudiced by the fact that they are closely directed by central headquarters. But the central direction, given the system of electing committee members and the character of our society and politics, cannot be complete. Enemies of the program are elected to serve as program administrators. The result clearly allows one to presume that alternative modes of administration of considerably greater efficiency could be devised. The committee system, in my view, is deficient both as an institution of democracy and as an instrument of efficient administration. And any attempt to correct one of these deficiencies is likely to exacerbate the other.

It is more difficult to pass judgment on the committees in a third area. The very nature of what is called supply management engages those applying the regulations in matters of a quasi-judicial nature. Should farmer Jones have his productivity index (which governs the dollar amount he receives for diverted acres) raised ten percentage points? If so, since the county operates within a fixed total limit, whose index will be lowered? When the Krueger brothers divide up their father's farm, who gets the cotton allotment? Is the partnership formed for the growing of rice a bona fide partnership, or does it represent manipulation of the legal forms for the illegal transfer of rice allotments? Should Mr. Carlson, who has had cows grazing intermittently on acreage supposedly lying fallow, be given his conservation payment on his plea that kids coming home from the rural school have just for fun allowed the cattle to roam where they ought not? Such questions — and others far more complex — are frequently before county committees. The decisions rendered are of great consequence to the farmers (and the farm corporations) concerned. Although discretion of the county committees has consistently declined through the years — not least of all because of the committees' insistence that central direction relieve them of judging the nasty cases — there will always be an irreducible number of these quasi-judicial matters before a local office.

Does justice follow when decisions on these matters are made by a locally elected committee? Would alternative modes of adjudication produce greater justice? The Department of Agriculture has never faced these questions with sufficient seriousness to gather and publish the basic facts upon which they could be answered with any confidence. Nor has our committee had the time or resources to repair that omission. What follows on the issue is thus speculative.

It is reasonable to suppose that a farmers' committee is well qualified for the task of adjudication just because both those judged and judging are neighbors. Persons serving as judges have an intimate acquaintanceship with the issues at hand. Such close acquaintanceship is not likely to be matched by any alternative adjudicators, whether an appointed statewide committee of farmers or a specially trained panel of civil servants.

On the other hand, there are reasons (still on speculative grounds) that lead one to believe that county committees poorly perform their quasi-judicial tasks. The very fact of

intimate acquaintanceship with and participation in the local community may lead not to even-handed justice but to subservience to the powerful and neglect of the weak. (It is worth noting that in all the county committees of the South there has never been, as far as I can discover, a single Negro member.) Justice, in other words, may be hindered by intimacy and fostered by aloofness. This is especially so in a rural community where powerful people have a great opportunity to punish their local opponents with a wide range of economic, social, and political weapons. The linkage in many counties between political (or farm) organizations and ASC committees is also prejudicial to justice. Where this relationship exists it at least implies that the dominant organization in the county can prevent certain people from holding membership in the committee; at most, it means that the organization consistently receives for its adherents special consideration in committee adjudications.

In sum, it can be speculated that a more even-handed justice might follow from alternative methods of adjudication. The data are not in hand to say this with certainty. But clearly the deficiencies of the committees as exemplars of democracy and as effective administrative units are not offset by their virtues as a source of justice. On the contrary, it is likely that a badly needed, close examination of the committees as sources of justice might condemn them on that ground, too.

On one score the committee system must provisionally be given higher grades. There exists a substantial degree of farmer acceptance for supply management programs. Without acceptance there would be no programs. For example, in the midwest, limitations of feed-grain acreages (and payment for diverted acres) are effective only if an individual farmer volunteers to participate. Similarly, the Agricultural Conservation Program depends upon voluntary participation. In both cases, considerable regulations accompany the financial incentives. In establishing marketing quotas to bring about reduction in the supply of such produces as cotton, rice, tobacco, wheat or peanuts, approval by at least two-thirds of the eligible producers must be secured in a referendum. (Price supports then become effective for the crop concerned.) Such provisions are written into law for various reasons, not least of all because Congress is uncertain where wisdom and justice lie, which in turn reflects the bitter division of opinion among those working in agriculture and related industries. A substantial segment of that opinion believes no supply limitation program of any sort should exist on anything but a temporary basis.

The Department of Agriculture must therefore persuade farmers to be its clients before most ASC programs can become effective. Historically, community and county committees were inaugurated precisely so that they would aid in this persuasion job. And more than twenty-five years ago — when the programs were new, farms were smaller and almost twice as numerous, roads were bad, rural telephones a scarcity, and television nonexistent — committees may have been the only effective persuasive device.

It is by no means certain that they still are. The whole matter can be discussed only in the most tentative terms because, as in so many matters facing the study group, the data necessary for firm conclusions are not at hand. The committees exist, and so does farmer acceptance, the latter ranging from tolerable to excellent. This has brought many farm leaders to the easy conclusion that the committees are indispensable to acceptance, and that without the committees there would be no acceptance. But the conclusion may be false. For one thing, no other systematic means of persuasion have ever been tried. For another, there are great regional variations in the farmers' willingness to participate in ASC programs (tobacco and cotton growers are more willing than corn growers) which are not explained by variations in the effectiveness of the committee system. The causality, on the contrary, may go in the opposite direction, i.e., high farmer acceptance may produce more effective committees. Most important, acceptance of ASC programs depends in very large measure on the financial incentives offered, almost $4 billion in direct subsidies in 1962. The committees are secondary to cash in persuading farmers to participate in ASC

programs. This alone suggests that it should not be difficult to find substitutes for the committees in their role as persuaders.

Nevertheless, in my view the best justification for retaining the committee system is that it effectively encourages the voluntary participation necessary to the existence of ASC programs. Since other means of persuasion have not been proved effective (because they have not been tried), one is justified in seeking, at least in the short run, improvements in the committee system rather than its abolition. Assuming that ASC programs are desirable, something less than the best administrative system is for a time acceptable, if this acceptance insures the programs' existence. I believe that a good deal of the cant about the committees as proud local democracies and as efficient administrative arms is evidence of a general unwillingness to recognize the committees as, primarily, program sales units. And doubts about the committees as purveyors of justice are fortified: since they must spawn gemutlichkeit, justice is harder born.

All these considerations (and others) make me considerably more skeptical than the committee majority about the utility of the ASC committee system. I believe a prudent Secretary of Agriculture would, while improving the system, look to its eventual demise. Immediately, in my view, the committees should be deprived of their administrative, as opposed to their quasi-judicial and persuasive, functions. The county managers would be directly responsible in the administrative chain of command to the Secretary of Agriculture. The managers and their staffs would be full civil servants of the United States. The issue of accountability to the Secretary would be solved, and the anomaly of a Cabinet member operating a program with a large fraction of key personnel inimical to it would be substantially liquidated.

I believe these steps could be taken without threat to program acceptance. County committees would, for a time at least, exist for the performance of the quasi-judicial and promotional functions. An effort should be made to determine more exactly than is now known how well the first of the functions is performed, and which of the many possible substitutes for the committees as promotional devices might be politically feasible. If, as I suspect, better methods can be found for both functions, the county committees would in time disappear. (So would community committees. Indeed, they even now do too little to justify their existence.)

It is not true that the only alternative to committee administration is straight-line authority running from the Secretary of Agriculture to employees at the county level. In most domestic programs of the federal government administration is accomplished through cooperative arrangements with states and localities, ranging from grants-in-aid (as in public assistance and roads) to more informal collaboration (as in law enforcement). The Department of Agriculture's experience with this mode of administration has not been a happy one: the State extension services (and county agents) have often been more responsive to the Farm Bureau or other political influences than to central leadership. As if in reaction to this difficulty, the Department in other programs has ignored the constitutionally designed system of state and local governments.1/ Moreover, Agriculture has established

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1/In early legislation for the ASCS (The Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act of 1935, as amended in 1936) Section 7 provided that the program should be carried out by the states through federal grants. Authority to the Secretary to carry out the program directly, without going through the states, was originally limited to two years. National administration was continued under successive temporary extensions of grants of power to the Secretary until 1962, when the old grant-in-aid provisions were finally repealed. The 1935-36 grant system provided for specially elected ASC county and community committees as well as state administration. For reasons suggested in the text I think it highly advantageous that this legislation was never implemented.

through one device or another its own system of local governments, directly in the case of the elected committees for the ASC and for the Farmers Home Administration. (The federally sponsored local governments for the soil conservation program require state enabling legislation.)

Rural local governments in the United States, with a few exceptions, are by common consent the nation's most deficient governments. They suffer from having too little to do. They suffer from voter apathy and therefore control by "courthouse gangs." They suffer from inadequate organization, low grade personnel, and services performed at a low level of efficiency. Causes for these conditions are numerous, and they would exist if there were no United States Department of Agriculture. Nevertheless, the Department has contributed to the low state of rural (especially county) local government. First, ASC offices in every rural county compete with the county government in attracting leaders, skilled personnel, electorate attention, and in other ways. In many areas, county operations are dwarfed by the ASC programs, as measured by dollar expenditures or impact on the resident, or both. This competition has without doubt been deleterious to county government. More important, by not working collaboratively with local governments (or states) the Department of Agriculture has deprived these governments of significant advantages. Grant programs in other fields have been used to raise standards of personnel, organization, and performance. They have increased the scope of activity of states and cities, and they have added to the stature of those institutions.

I believe that the Department of Agriculture has been seriously deficient in ignoring local and state governments in the administration of the ASC (and other) programs. There are great difficulties in the way of overcoming the deficiency. For example, standards of organization and personnel established by the Department might require such a basic overhauling of county governments that amendments to state constitutions would be necessary. (Ordinarily, grant programs involve only legislative and administrative action by states and localities.) Safeguards would have to be constructed to insure that ASC programs should not become the preponderant part of — and therefore swamp — rural county functions. This would argue for initiating cooperative action for only a part of what the ASC committees now do. In turn, there arise the enormously complex tasks of phasing programs from one form of administration to another.

Despite all difficulties, there seems to me great merit in the Department's turning to a system by which it shares its responsibilities for ASC programs with the duly constituted system of local governments. This would end the Department's current game of charades with local democracy. It would, given the changes demanded of county governments, supply an effective working force at the local level. (But the quasi-judicial function would have to be given to some specially constituted body.) And it would contribute to the substantial upgrading of that local government which needs it most. Many problems, both old and new, would of course remain. The federal-state-local partnership is not a panacea; it is a viable relationship that through time becomes more rather than less effective.

These are considerations that can only be effectuated over a long span of years. One effective rural local government at the county level may be achievable in time; two seem to me too much even to hope for. In that happy day when the world, rather than the nation, is the focus of agricultural policy and supply-curtailment programs therefore only a memory, a radical upgrading of county governments might be the only permanent monument to the principal ASC programs.

November 9, 1962

PART II
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND
OF
THE FARMER COMMITTEE SYSTEM

By Joseph Hajda
Staff Director,
Study Committee

PREFACE

In order to facilitate the deliberations of the Study Committee appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture on June 13, 1962, to review the farmer committee system, the author examined all available written records pertinent to the review, and interviewed many knowledgeable persons in Washington and across the country. As soon as it became apparent that there was no up-to-date History of the Farmer Committee System, the Chairman of the Study Committee, A Lars Nelson, instructed the author, who served as the Committee Staff Director, to prepare a short history. With the assistance of selected staff members of the Department, the study was prepared, mimeographed on August 14, 1962, and circulated among the members of the Study Committee, among several specialists in the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and among outside experts. Many valuable comments were received and incorporated into this revised version of the paper.

The author is grateful for the assistance and suggestions of the many fine persons with whom he had the privilege to be associated in the process of writing this short history, and acknowledges with special gratitude the encouragement and critical evaluation by A. Lars Nelson, and the professional assistance of Charles F. Kiefer of the Management Operations Staff, Clarence J. Hein of the Economic Research Service, and Everett H. P. Felber of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.

The Origin of the Farmer Committee System

The farmer committee system, which today forms an important part of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, began in 1933. It was developed as an unique variation of the democratic process in response to a national emergency at a critical period of American history. Initially it was viewed as a temporary expedient with no permanent place in the American system of administration. 1/

The agricultural depression contributed to the Great Depression of the late 1920's and early 1930's. As a result of deterioration in the agricultural sector of the economy, both at home and abroad, the depression in the other sectors of the economy was accelerated and intensified. This national crisis wrought a profound and far-reaching economic and political impact on American agriculture and American farmers:

> As prices declined, farmers increased their production even more in an attempt to maintain their income. They succeeded only in lowering farm prices further. Farmers produced surpluses to sell at whatever prices were offered. . . By 1932, cotton had dropped to about six cents a pound, hogs to four cents a pound, wheat to thirty-eight cents a bushel, and corn to thirty-two cents a bushel. Gross farm income dropped from nearly 18 billion dollars in 1919 to little more than 6 billion dollars in 1932. Net farm income also dropped—from 9 billion dollars in 1920 to 2.5 billion dollars in 1932. 2/

The whole national economy was in a state of emergency and it was in no position to halt the decline in farm income, nor to correct it. Factories closed their doors, workers went into breadlines.

These circumstances, affecting the lives of all Americans, and striking hard against the welfare of farmers, produced a political unpheavel at the polls in 1932. A new Administration came to Washington pledged to correct the decline in farm income as one aspect of the massive task of rescuing the nation from its plight. During the famous "one hundred days" after March 4, 1933, the Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA) was passed by the Congress providing production controls on specified commodities and authorizing payments to cooperating farmers. The Act authorized the Secretary of Agriculture to establish for the more effective administration of these functions "State and local committees, or associations of producers and to permit cooperative associations of producers, when in his judgment, they are qualified to so do, to act as agents of their members and patrons in connection with the distribution of rental or benefit payments." 3/

1/ However, Henry Wallace's writings of the 1930's viewed the committee system as a permanent contribution to public administration, and as something that would outlive the period of national emergency. M. L. Wilson, who originated the idea of farmer committees, also appeared to believe this.

2/ Murray Thompson, "The Search for Parity", Yearbook of Agriculture, 1962, p. 544.

3/ Agricultural Adjustment, May 1933 to February 1934: A Report of the Administrator, Appendix J, p. 365.

Temporary committees, either appointed or elected, handled the first stages of the original AAA programs. After these programs were in operation, cooperating producers in each township, or "community," elected committeemen, many of whom had been on the temporary committee. The chairmen of these committees in each county then met to elect from among themselves a county committee, composed of a chairman and two to four members. 4/

There were several reasons for the Secretary's decision to use the new authority. The specific commodity problems were both national and local. To apply the program at the individual farm involved determinations as to acreages planted and average crop yields. From these data would come individual farm allotments. As knowledgeable local people—farmers—were brought into this process, the Secretary believed that the program would be handled more equitably, more responsibly, more acceptably, and more in keeping with the democratic idea.

Thus, some 4,200 local production control associations came quickly into being; eventually they evolved into committees. There was an underlying singleness of purpose. Committeemen wanted to be of genuine assistance to farmers generally, to make useful contributions to improved agricultural welfare, and otherwise to participate in the effort to correct agricultural conditions. The Extension Service personnel played a key role in the early years of the new committee system. However, in the Midwest a somewhat different pattern of local administration by committee developed, and the Extension personnel had less influence than in the other parts of the country.

Initial Procedures

When a producer signed an adjustment contract he automatically became a member of the production-control association for that commodity in his county. He and other members of the association elected the local officers of the association from among themselves. Details of local administration of the program were in the hands of association committees, or community committees. Committeemen were paid for certain services. The cost of local administration was deducted from payments to producers. However, in the South up until 1936 committeemen were reimbursed for their services by the Extension Service from appropriations made available to it.

The community committee consisted of from three to five representatives of the signers of production-adjustment contracts in the community. It made the production-adjustment contracts available to farmers, assisted individual producers in preparing data required in the contract, helped farmers in obtaining substantiating evidence of production and acreage, obtained production data of non-contract signers, checked data offered by cooperating producers, made adjustments in those data, obtained execution of contracts, certified accuracy of statements in contracts, and checked and certified performance of contract. In later years, other phases of farm programs requiring action at the local level were assigned to the committee system. The procedures governing the committee system changed with time, experience and circumstance.

From these community committees came the executives of the county production-control associations, who were responsible for county-wide administration of the commodity program.

The chairman of each community committee in a county became a member of the board of directors of the county production-control association for that commodity. In

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4/Arthur T. Thompson, "Farmers as Committees," Yearbook of Agriculture, 1962, p. 559.

the deliberations of the board, each member was entitled to one vote. From its membership, the board elected a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. The president automatically became chairman of the county allotment committee. The board then elected from two to four of its members who, with the chairman, constituted the county allotment committee.

Attempts at partisan domination of the committees were forestalled by making it possible for committeemen to be removed by their own neighbors at annual election. Farm organizations gave full endorsement to the farmer committee system, and they generally supported the adjustment programs.

The supervision and guidance of the county and community committees was carried out through State committees. The early State committees usually were organized by the State Extension Director, and he served as the Executive Officer. As was the case with the county committees, there was regional variation in the organization and operation of the State committees. As the program developed, State committee members were appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture, and an attempt was made to have them be representative of the various farm interests in each State.

The Department staff in Washington computed from the official records the allotment for each State and each county, and thus fixed the amount of the commodity on which adjustment payments would be made. The computation for individual farmers was done by the local committee. It was the county committee's job to divide the fixed county allotment fairly among the producers in proportion to their past production.

The Washington office developed regulations and administrative rulings, often on the basis of practical and justifiable proposals made by the committees. Frequently, consultations between Washington administrative personnel and the committees took place in public meetings attended by county and community committeemen and farmers interested in the programs. The attendance at these public meetings was usually very good, and the exchange of views was beneficial to both Washington personnel and to the producers.

New Legislation

Two Acts of Congress were of historic importance in the development of the committee system: The Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act of 1936, and the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938.

The former Act authorized the Secretary of Agriculture to utilize county and community committees of agricultural producers and the agricultural extension service or other approved agencies in carrying out the provisions of the pertinent sections of the Act.

Following passage of the Act on February 29, 1936, committee duplications which had survived the emergency organization were eliminated. A single elected farmer committee served all commodity groups involved in any one county.

This Act also provided for a system of Federal-State-local administration in the field of farm conservation work, based on grants-in-aid and State plans approved by the Secretary of Agriculture, similar to programs operated in the fields of highways, public health, and welfare. This system was never put into effect because subsequent legislation continued the existing system. At various times since 1933, there has been disagreement over the proper relationship of the farmer committees and the program they administered to other programs of the Department. But as the adjustment program evolved, it lost its emergency character, and administrative problems became more routine.

In the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938, Congress, for the first time, required the use of elected farmer committees. It directed the Secretary to use local and State committees in handling of the agricultural conservation, acreage allotment and marketing quota programs. The Act required the Secretary to designate local administrative areas as units for administration of the authorized programs, and provided that no local area should include more than one county or parts of different counties. It prescribed such things as the general method of electing local and county committees, the number of committeemen to serve, and the composition and method of appointment of State farmer committees.

The pertinent passage from the Act is printed below:

> In carrying out the provisions of this section... the Secretary is directed to utilize the services of local and State committees selected as hereinafter provided. The Secretary shall designate local administrative areas as units for administration of programs under this section. No such local area shall include more than one county or parts of different counties. Farmers within any such local administrative area, and participating or cooperating in programs administered within such area, shall elect annually from among their number a local committee of not more than three members for such area and shall also elect annually from among their number a delegate to a county convention for the election of a county committee. The delegates from the various local areas in the county shall, in a county convention, elect, annually, the county committee for the county which shall consist of three members who are farmers in the county. The local committee shall elect a secretary and may utilize the county agricultural extension agent for such purpose. The county committee shall select a secretary who may be the county agricultural extension agent. If such county agricultural extension agent shall not have been elected secretary of such committee, he shall be ex officio a member of the county committee. The county agricultural extension agent shall not have the power to vote. In any county in which there is only one local committee the local committee shall also be the county committee. In each State there shall be a State committee for the State composed of not less than three or more than five farmers who are legal residents of the State and who are appointed by the Secretary. The State director of the Agricultural Extension Service shall be ex officio a member of such State committee. The ex officio members of the county and State committees shall be in addition to the number of members of such committees hereinbefore specified. The Secretary shall make such regulations as are necessary relating to the selection and exercise of the functions of the respective committees, and to the administration, through such committees, of such programs.

Growth of Committee System

As the farmer committee system developed as a permanent institution, the pattern of organization became diversified along regional lines. For administrative purposes the 48 States were divided into five areas. Each area strove to develop a more uniform system of State and local administration of the diverse farm programs. A dual conception of the role of the committees developed around the so-called "southern system" and the "corn belt system."

In the South, the State Executive Officers and county administrative officers (called principal clerks) became key personnel in the system. As a rule, they ran "the show", while the State and county committees served largely part-time as boards of directors with limited "policy-making" and appellate authority. There was a tendency to use the committees with some imagination between 1948 and 1952, and a cooperative principal clerk-committee system was developed in the Southern States. The State Executive Officers had almost complete control over the selection of county principal clerks, and, in some States, did not permit them to serve in their home counties.

In the Midwest (the North Central area), however, the State and county committeemen played the key role in the system and served full-time in office capacities. As a rule, the county committee selected its own chief clerk and office staff to handle administrative detail.

The other areas of the country evolved committee systems resembling in some respects either the southern or midwestern model, but also with their own unique features of organization.

There were also important operational differences among different States; the system of communications was extremely diverse; internal audit functions were organized and performed by the States themselves under the supervision of regional offices; and national policy was implemented without too much uniformity. Control, supervision, direction, and coordination was effectuated, since 1936, from the Federal level through regional directors and their offices, reorganized subsequently into the Field Service Branch. Later on, the chief area officers were called Administrator's Fieldmen, and, since the early 1950's, Area Directors; they reported to a Deputy Administrator from a Washington, rather than a regional, headquarters.

However, partly as a result of budgetary limitations, and partly for other reasons, certain uniform tendencies evolved in all areas. The most important one was the shift in the role of the community committeemen. Whereas formerly they were the "heart and soul" of the farmer committee system, they came to play a less active role in farm programs administration, and in some States came very close to becoming a "paper" organization.

Another important uniform tendency was the use of farmer fieldmen as permanent liaison between the State and county offices. They became the key link in the whole system of administration of farm programs, and worked, in the 1940's, under the direction and supervision of the Chairman of the State Committee who served as the Chief Administrative Officer in the State office.

The types of programs administered by the farmer committees have varied considerably over the years. During World War II, and again during the Korean War, the emphasis was on increasing production to meet domestic and foreign needs. During World War II, the county committee chairmen were also chairmen of the Defense (later War) Boards, and the farmer committees played a key role in scrap drives on farms, assistance to the selective service system, rationing, etc. For a period in the 1940's there was emphasis on the conservation aspects of the program. The production adjustment and control aspects varied from time to time with the changes in legislation adopted by Congress. The interest of individual farmers and various farm groups in the farmer committees has also varied with the programs. There was a slacking off of farmers' interest in committees at the end of World War II, as the emphasis on increased production prevailed, and there was also a decrease in the enthusiasm and the number of men going out from regional and State offices to maintain liaison with the farmer committees.

The relationship between the farmer committees and the State and local administrators of other agencies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture also has varied. Between 1945 and 1951, an attempt was made to improve it by means of the USDA State and county

councils, which included representatives from the farmer committees. The councils were succeeded from 1951 to 1953 by Agricultural Mobilization committees, headed by the chairmen of the farmer committees.

As farm organizations developed major differences about the future course of agricultural policy, their endorsement of the committee system was affected. Some of the State and county committeemen were drawn into the political arena where they were subject to partisan attacks.

However, the farmer committee system remained an essential component of the American administrative system with a record singularly free from fraudulent and unethical practices.

1953-1960 Developments

In March 1953, a reorganization of the Department of Agriculture took place. Part of the Production and Marketing Administration (successor to the AAA) became the Commodity Stabilization Service. The community, county, and State committees became identified as the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation committees and their supervision was assigned to the Commodity Stabilization Service.

The appointed farmers on State committees were to be responsible for policy matters. Full-time work by State committeemen was halted. They were to be paid on a when-actually-employed basis, and limited in the number of days they could work during a year.

The Department's statement of policy for State committeemen required that each nomination for membership on the State committee be accompanied by a report on the acceptability of the nominee to heads of State farm organizations, Deans of Agriculture in the Land-Grant Colleges, Directors of Extension, State Commissioners of Agriculture, and other agricultural leaders in the State. The appointment by the Secretary of Agriculture was for a period of one year, and a rotation system was established whereby one or more State committeemen were replaced each year.

The State committee was to determine program and administrative policy, but the execution of such policies was to be carried out by its employees under the direction of a State Administrative Officer, employed by, but not a member of the committee.

A similar separation of duties was announced for county committees. The elected county committeemen were to work on an as-necessary part-time basis only. Each county committee was to hire an office manager responsible for day-to-day operations in the county. The farmer committees elected to administer the program were to concern themselves primarily with policy matters.

In 1954, election of county and community committeemen was changed. The Secretary announced that community election boards of farmers would be selected by county election boards, composed of the county agricultural extension agent as chairman, the heads of the Soil Conservation Service and Farmers Home Administration offices in the county, and the county head of each general farm organization operating in the county. Community election boards selected the slates of nominees for the community committees. County committeemen were elected at a convention of delegates from the communities in the county. County committeemen could not be officials of general farm organizations nor could they serve as employees in their own county offices.

The new system was to be uniformly applied in all areas. There was disagreement over whether these changes strengthened or weakened the farmer committee system. From one point of view, this was strengthening the committee conception evolved in the "southern

system" as the board of directors of the State and county operations. Committee members were relieved of administrative detail, so they could better concentrate on their role in "policy making." From another point of view, they were being relegated to merely advisory roles to county office managers and State Administrative Officers, with more standardized national administration rolling back regional differences in local control and administration of farm programs. According to this point of view, the deactivation of the elected farmer committees was in line with the assumed objective of eliminating farm programs from the national scene.

The attempt to limit county and community committeemen to no more than three one-year consecutive terms in office was particularly controversial; the limitation was removed by Congress. This attempt plus reported abuses by the Missouri State committee in dictating the selection of county personnel and the removal of county committeemen resulted in extensive congressional hearings in 1956 on several bills intended to change the rules regarding the committees.

Other revisions provided for removal of county and community committeemen and election board members only by a majority vote of the State committee. Provision was also made for the right of appeal by ousted persons.

In 1957, a comprehensive nationwide classification and pay plan for county ASC employees was developed and put in operation; a major reclassification of the positions in State offices took place; a county office manager trainee program was inaugurated with the objective of providing a pool of qualified applicants when vacancies occurred in county offices; a system of issuing instructions in handbooks was installed; and a national system of annual, comprehensive, audits and operation review procedures in every State and county office was inaugurated.

Later on, the county office employees were given additional fringe benefits, partly in response to their organization in State associations. Early in 1959, under the leadership of several county office managers, State associations formed the National Association of ASC County Office Employees. 5/

By 1960, the farmer committee system of farm programs administration was transformed into a nationwide manager-committee system. State and local administration was fully institutionalized around the State and county offices in which the full-time, salaried personnel was considerably upgraded.

In about a third of the States, "old hands" in the position of the Administrative Officer and farmer fieldmen were able to exercise considerable influence on the way the farmer committees were used as active agents on the county level of administration. They also had a great deal of influence in regional meetings and in the development of procedural policies in the Washington office. As a result, in New York, North Carolina, and a score of other States, the farmer committees were less affected by the revisions and transformations of the 1950's.

However, in those States where the key appointments of Administrative Officers and farmer fieldmen were filled by a partisan selection without any prior experience for the job, the quality of administration deteriorated, and led to embarrassing developments, especially in Texas, Oklahoma, and Missouri. The farmer committees suffered most in

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5/By 1962, the Association's membership included more than 75 percent of 15,500 full-time county office employees, and NASCOE was granted by the Secretary of Agriculture exclusive recognition to represent all full-time employees in county offices in negotiation with management on terms of employment and working conditions.

this deterioration. Their initial drive had become blunted, and in many cases completely lost. The feeling of urgency and enthusiasm on the part of farmer committeemen evaporated, and was replaced—especially on the community level—by inertia and lethargy.

1961 Changes

In line with the objectives set forth by the new Administration, the Secretary of Agriculture announced on March 23, 1961, important changes in the regulations governing farmer committees:

(1) County and community election boards are eliminated, and authority to conduct elections now is vested in ASC county committees;

(2) Officers of general farm organizations now become eligible to serve as county committeemen; and

(3) The authority to assign duties to community committees is put in the hands of county committees instead of county office managers. 6/

The objective of these changes was to revitalize the county and local farmer committee system, and to change the spirit governing the administration of farm programs on the local level.

The Secretary pointed out in his statement that

> managers in some counties have taken over prerogatives of the committees, with the result that committees have not fully assumed their responsibilities either because of lack of interest or because they were led to believe that the committee function was purely advisory.
>
> We intend to actively encourage all committees to assume their full responsibilities and to make it abundantly clear that the committee has the responsibility and the county office manager carries out the day-to-day operations. County committees will be expected to determine policies and assume overall responsibility, and managers will be expected to carry out these policies and to supervise the day-to-day operations of the county offices.
>
> We plan to abolish all arbitrary time limits on the service of committeemen, so that their talents may be fully utilized in getting understanding of our programs by farmers and the general public. At the same time, we do not expect to use them to perform purely clerical functions for which they are not particularly well suited by either training or experience. Active farmers who are representative farm leaders in their areas—the type who should represent farmers and the Department of Agriculture on ASC county committees—cannot be expected to spend full time working as committeemen, and we do not anticipate any such contingency.
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> It is our firm belief that the ASC farmer-committee is the most effective and economical method of operation if it operates as originally conceived under the enabling legislation. We intend to see that the committee system functions with full authority and responsibility in the days ahead. 7/

6/Press Release, USDA 851-61.
7/Ibid

Operations in the State offices were also somewhat realigned to emphasize the more active participation of the State farmer committeemen. The prescribed rotation system of State committeemen was abandoned.

The present organization, then, provides for overall direction of production adjustment, agricultural conservation, price support, and related programs in the county by the elected county committees, subject to the general direction and supervision of the State committee, appointed by the Secretary upon the recommendation of ASCS.[8/] Under the direction of the county committee and subject to the regulations of the Department, the county office manager is responsible for day-to-day operations of the county office. As is the case in other organizations of this type, the relative influence of committee chairmen, committee members, and managers varies considerably from county to county. But it seems that in those counties where the farmer committees feel that they should serve, or are compelled to serve, principally in advisory capacity, they do not feel responsible for county ASC operations. As a result, such committees are not alert, and their effectiveness in the whole system of checks and balances is impaired.

In spite of the many modifications in the committee system, the 1961 experience indicates that the farmer committee method of administering farm programs is sound.

After the Congress enacted in March, 1961, the Emergency Feed Grain Act of 1961, the Secretary of Agriculture began immediately putting the new law into effect. It was already late. At the several meetings held around the country with farmers and U. S. Department of Agriculture field personnel, the point was repeatedly stressed that the new adjustment program could not become truly effective without the complete cooperation of the farmer committee system. By June 1, 1961, the initial objectives of the 1961 program had been accomplished through the combined efforts of tens of thousands of community committeemen and some 9,000 farmer county committeemen and their county employees in more than 3,000 counties, supervised by committeemen and staff of 50 State offices working under the general direction of the ASCS staff of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. The farmer committeemen and the ASCS employees performed extremely well in obtaining participation. The general consensus was that the program could not have been accomplished without the elected farmer committees.

Conclusion

Thus, over nearly thirty years, the State and local administration of farm programs functioned to a large extent because of the existence of farmer committees, established to perform a wide variety of tasks authorized by law. The farmer committee system operated under six successive Secretaries of Agriculture, each subscribing to differing political philosophies and each advocating dissimilar approaches to farm problems.

The committee system at its inception was a product of the times. It was born during the Great Depression, and within a brief period of time after its birth, it became a vital tool for fostering our agriculture's economic well-being, psychological uplifting, and political stabilization. The committees' role has, however, been changed as the administration of farm programs became institutionalized. In spite of the modifications in farmer committees' standing, they survived both the changes in the national administration and the numerous personnel changes at the Washington, State, and local level. The committee system is still regarded as a key element of the field forces of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Over the years, farmers have been able to participate in farm programs administration, and reassure their neighbors about the objectives of adjustment programs. They

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8/ The Director of the State Extension Service is ex-officio member of the State committee with voting power. The county agent is likewise an ex-officio member of the county committee but without the power to vote.

have been able to secure factual data of county-wide importance, and to communicate their ideas and attitudes regarding their part in agricultural adjustment programs to committees composed of their peers. The farmer committeemen have been able to handle a wide variety of tasks at the local levels under differing commodity programs in a satisfactory manner. In most cases, the normal political patterns of an area did not interfere with their responsibilities. The experience of farmer committeemen was of great importance in preparing them for public service in a variety of national, State, and local agencies of government. Several men of distinction in public affairs were the product of the farmer committee system.

The joint responsibility for the administration of agricultural adjustment programs designed to protect both farm income and the consumer price structure has resulted in a time-tested partnership of producers and the government. The farmer committees have not always been asked to assume major responsibility for the administration of programs authorized by law, and to serve as active agents of the Department of Agriculture. But they have never failed to respond whenever such a request for help had been made and communicated to them.

The problem for the future of the committee system lies in a critical evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses judged against the whole record of performance, and in the ability of leaders of agriculture at the national, State, and local levels to be even more responsive to the changes in farm population and to adjust to changing needs and conditions.

Between 1933 and 1961, farm population has dropped from 32,393,000 to 14,803,000.[9/] During the same period the proportion of the total population that resided on farms decreased from 25.8% to 8.1%. The number of farms decreased from 6,740,750 in 1933 to 3,811,000 in 1961;[10/] the decrease since 1950 was over one-third. The average size of farm has increased from slightly under 160 acres in 1933 to 307 acres in 1961. Figures are not available on the change in the number of family farms over this period, but one authority indicates that proportion of family-operated farms has not declined significantly.[11/]

The trend toward fewer and larger farms has important implications for the whole committee system, especially on the State and county levels. The number of counties

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9/ Estimates prepared by the Farm Population Branch, Economic and Statistical Analysis Division, Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. The change in definition of the farm population made in the 1960 Census reduced earlier estimates of farm population. The new definition specified persons living in rural territory on places of 10 or more acres from which sales of farm products amounted to $50 or more in 1959 and on places of less than 10 acres from which sales of farm products amounted to $250 or more in 1959.

10/ According to the Statistical Reporting Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

11/ John M. Brewster, "The Changing Pattern of American Agriculture," paper prepared for meeting of National Agricultural Advisory Committee, Washington, D.C., July 10-11, 1962.

with less than 1,000 farms increased substantially, and it is likely that more than 50% of all counties will be so classified in the near future. 12/

A thoughtful re-examination of the farmer committees' structure and role, based on the perception of these developments, needs to consider the question of proper decentralization and the problem of responsibility in government. It needs to delineate the strengths and weaknesses of administrative decentralization and centralization, respectively: How much is gained by emphasizing local self-determination? What are the advantages and disadvantages of "straight-line" organization with appointed county committees? Would national farm programs ever be acceptable to farmers if they did not have the reassurance provided by elected committees of their peers? Would effective administration of farm programs be possible with concentration of authority in the hands of the bureaucracy?

To what extent does the present system open the door to subversion or nullification of the programs authorized by law by putting field operations in the hands of persons who are neither readily accessible nor directly responsible to the Congress and the Secretary of Agriculture? What changes would make it possible to take both local and national considerations into account in administering farm programs without making them inoperative or ineffectual at county levels, and without weakening responsibility in government?

A thoughtful re-examination of the joint responsibility for, and local participation in, administration of farm programs needs to consider the role, the duties, the selection and the tenure of farmer committees. It should consider meaningful adjustments and improvements conducive to a more perfect joint national-State-local administration of farm programs in the 1960's.

12/ The 1959 Census of Agriculture lists:
1,678 counties with more than 1,000 farms, and
1,401 counties with less than 1,000 farms.

	Number of Farms in 1959							
	0	1-99	100-199	200-399	400-599	600-799	800-999	1,000 and up
No. of Counties:	3	84	110	299	284	330	291	1,678

PART III

NOTE ON THE STUDY COMMITTEE PROCEDURE

By Joseph Hajda
Staff Director,
Study Committee

In January 1961, it was apparent that a thorough overhaul of the administration of farm programs was needed. To begin the studies preparatory to possible changes, a new self-survey approach was inaugurated by Secretary Freeman. He characterized it as "pioneering in an effort to make the Department of Agriculture more effective in serving the farmers, consumers, business and — most important — the taxpayer."

A thorough modernization of management is now in progress. New procedures are being developed within the Department, and new administrative techniques are replacing old ones.

As the critical self-survey proceeded, it became apparent that the administration of farm programs on State and local levels also would need a thorough review. The National Agricultural Advisory Commission (NAAC) discussed this possibility, and plans were advanced to make such a study. A subcommittee of the NAAC was first considered to re-examine the farmer committee system. After discussion, the Secretary broadened the subcommittee to an ad hoc eight-man Study Committee reporting directly to him and to the NAAC. It would include outside experts. Their appointment became effective June 13, 1962.

Committee members were selected on a bipartisan basis as experts in public administration and agriculture, and on a broadly representative basis both from the geographical and organizational points of view. Among the appointees were two former Secretaries of Agriculture, outstanding representatives of the major farm organizations and commodity groups, and recognized farm leaders of all major sections of the United States. Six members were chosen from the ranks of the NAAC; the Chairman of the Commission became an ex officio member of the Committee, and was responsible for the successful launching of its activities. Two distinguished political scientists -- one of them serving as the President of the American Political Science Association -- were selected by the Secretary. A member of the Staff Economist Group of the U. S. Department of Agriculture was chosen to serve as the Secretary of the Study Committee. After the preparatory stage was over, the Assistant Secretary for Marketing and Stabilization was appointed by the Secretary to represent the Department on the Committee.

At its preliminary meeting on June 13, 1962, the Committee was asked by the Secretary to take a "hard, cold look" at the farmer committee system, to review and evaluate its effectiveness, and to consider alternative methods of improving the administration of farm programs. He suggested that an intensive survey be made of operations under existing legislation, and that consideration be given to new legislation as it might affect these operations. He asked the Committee to report to him and to the National Agricultural Advisory Commission, as soon as possible.

The Committee selected a political scientist to serve as its Staff Director, and agreed on the preliminary steps of its mode of operation. The Administrator of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) gave the Committee assurance of full support by the ASCS personnel and assigned one of his associates as a liaison between himself and the Committee. The ASCS staff played a major role in the initial period of information-gathering as well as in the stage of appraisal of various proposals for changes in the farmer committee system.

The Staff Director established a cooperative working relationship with the ASCS liaison representative and with his help examined hundreds of documents and reports pertinent to the review and interviewed dozens of ASCS spokesmen about their roles in the administrative process. Copies of the relevant materials were sent out to the members of the Committee between June 20 and 29, 1962.

The Staff Director acquainted all leading officials of the Department with the role of the Study Committee and maintained close contact with many of them from June to November 1962.

As its first step in evaluating the effectiveness of the administration of farm programs, the Study Committee decided to request background briefings from spokesmen for the major agencies of the Department. On the basis of this decision, the Staff Director prepared the agenda for the first formal meeting of the Committee.

At its meeting on July 6 and 7, 1962, the Committee received intensive background briefings from representatives of the ASCS and discussed with them several issues. It was also briefed by spokesmen for Farmers Home Administration, Soil Conservation Service, and the Cooperative Extension Service about their field organization and functions.

After short deliberation, the Committee decided to take its next major step in determining the effectiveness of the administration of farm programs in the form of broad, yet intensive, field surveys. It resolved to visit as many states as possible in the different sections of the country and interview farmer committeemen and ASCS staff. The review was to focus both on the structure and functioning of the State, county and community committees and their working relationship with full-time salaried personnel in the county and State ASCS offices and the Washington staff. The Committee decided against formal hearings and instructed the Staff Director to prepare special notes for the use of individual Committee members in the field.

In order to accomplish the purpose of the Study Group as effectively as possible within the time limit specified by the Secretary of Agriculture, three specialists from within the Department were reassigned to the staff after the first formal meeting, one on a full-time bais, and two on a part-time basis. In addition, several other Departmental specialists were consulted from time to time, and assisted the staff in expediting its work.

Oral reports were made by the Chairman and Staff Director on the progress of the Study Committee at the meeting of the National Agricultural Advisory Commission on July 10, 1962. Several important suggestions in respect to the field surveys were made by several members of the Commission.

The field surveys proved to be the most important source of information used in the subsequent meetings of the Committee. The geographic distribution of field surveys by Committee members and the Staff Director shows that all five ASCS areas were visited several times:

Midwest	-	13 visits covering 7 States
Southwest	-	7 visits covering 5 States
Southeast	-	6 visits covering 3 States
Northwest	-	6 visits covering 3 States
Northeast	-	4 visits covering 3 States
Total	-	36 visits covering 21 States

Hundreds of personal interviews were made by the members of the Committee and the Staff Director during the months of July, August, September, and October. Persons interviewed included State, county and community committeemen, key full-time salaried ASCS employees, farmers, Soil Conservation specialists, Cooperative Extension officials, agricultural economists and political scientists, farm organization leaders, and others.

The Committee also decided to establish informal contacts with the Washington offices of the major farm organizations and certain associations. The offices contacted by the Committee and the Staff Director between July 9 and 24, 1962, included:

National Grange
National Farmers Union
American Farm Bureau Federation
National Wheat Growers Association
National Association of Farmer Cooperatives
National Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

The contacts proved to be of great value because they alerted the Committee to a number of important avenues to the study of the administration of farm programs.

Following the discussions with the officials of the farm organizations, the Chairman of the Committee instructed the Staff Director to mail out, under his signature, letters to four categories of persons. Each person was invited to send the Chairman his "comments which may help our Study Committee to determine both the strengths and weaknesses of the ASC Committee System, and to recommend actions which can be taken to add to the effective administration of farm programs."

The letters were mailed out between July 11 and 19, 1962. By September 20, 1962, a total of 119 replies with comments were received. They were distributed as follows:

	Number of Letters	Number of Replies
Leading Officers of the National and State Associations of Soil Conservation Districts	72	26
State Commissioners of Agriculture	50	30
State Extension Directors	51	40
Leading Officials of Farmer Cooperatives	39	23
Total	212	119

In most cases, the replies were carefully prepared after consultation with other persons. They were, without exception, of constructive nature and thought-provoking. Many respondents expressed appreciation for the opportunity to express their views. Extensive excerpts from the comments were made available to the members of the Study Committee who gave them the most careful consideration.

In addition, the Committee members and the Staff Director received a number of unsolicited letters, including a letter from the Governor of Indiana and other distinguished persons. Excellent critical analyses of the farmer committee system were made by some of these authors.

Almost without exception, these replies and letters endorsed the elected farmer committee system and set forth for consideration many constructive suggestions for its improvement.

A second survey to obtain informed opinions from the field was made through a questionnaire sent to a 20 percent sample of ASCS county committee chairmen across the nation. After consultations with several specialists in the Department, the questionnaire was mailed out on July 20, 1962, to 612 county chairmen representing not only the total list of 3,061 county committees in the United States, but also each of the five ASCS areas, and each State, except Alaska and Hawaii. The sample was drawn by selecting every fifth person on the list. Each questionnaire was mailed to the home address rather than the ASCS county office to insure prompt action. The mailing resulted in a response from 450 chairmen or 74 percent at the time there was a cutoff, on August 16, 1962, to permit coding, tabulation, and analysis of the returns. Time did not permit a follow-up reminder mailing to those persons who did not respond. Although it would have been desirable to know the reactions of those who did not respond, it was possible to draw many conclusions for the country as a whole from the data provided by the 74 percent, as well as for the five ASCS areas.

Sample Survey of ASC County Committee Chairman

Area	Questionnaires		
	Mailed	Returned	
	Number	Number	Percent
Southeast	151	106	70
Midwest	156	129	83
Southwest	125	89	71
Northwest	102	67	66
Northeast	78	54	69
Area not given		5	1
Total	612	450	74

The tabulation and analysis of the returned questionnaires enabled the staff to prepare confidential papers on the attitudes of the county committee chairmen. The data was reviewed and discussed subsequently by the Study Committee and served as a point of reference in the making of the decisions by the Committee.

Following the instructions of the July meeting, the Staff Director and his associates prepared a short history of the farmer committee system (mimeographed on August 14, 1962), and a study paper on direct elections of county committees (mimeographed on September 7, 1962). The former was circulated not only among the members of the Study Group, but also among several knowledgeable persons in the Department, and among outside experts. Many valuable comments were received and a revised version of the paper, Historical Background of the Farmer Committee System, was completed on September 24, 1962. The second paper entitled, Direct Election of ASC County Committees, was reviewed by the Study Committee upon its completion and used in recommending improvements in the ASCS election system.

At the second formal meeting of the Committee on August 3 and 4, 1962, detailed reports on the field interviews were presented by individual members of the Study Group as well as a progress report by the Staff Director. Secretary Freeman, who had been kept informed of the Committee and staff work, joined the group and took part in the discussion of several alternative plans for the administration of farm programs. Upon his recommendation, the various alternatives to improve the farmer committee system were stated in writing by the members of the Committee and presented to him on August 6, 1962. The proposals were discussed at length by the Committee, and several key features of these plans became the basis for specific Committee recommendations to the Secretary later on.

The Committee reached a consensus that of all the alternatives considered, the retention and strengthening of the farmer committees was the best one, and that its efforts should be directed toward the attainment of that objective.

The Study Group asked for and received a briefing on special "problem counties," which supplemented its understanding of questions raised by Congressional investigating committees. Pertinent parts of the formal record of the McClellan Committee, which was examined by the Staff Director, were made available to the members of the Study Committee. A Committee member and the Staff Director were asked by the Chairman to make a trip to Texas and to review the special problems in that State.

After making these examinations and investigations, and after reviewing the record of the elected farmer committee system for the last thirty years, the Study Committee concluded that this system had a record which was singularly free from fraudulent and unethical practices.

At the third meeting of the Study Committee on September 10 and 11, 1962, additional reports on the field interviews were presented and discussed; a progress report was given by the Staff Director. Afterwards, decisions on key recommendations to the Secretary were made regarding the question of election of county and community committees, and the appointment of State committees and Executive Directors. An agreement was also reached about the overall format of the report to the Secretary, and the procedure to be followed in preparing the preliminary draft under the supervision of the Staff Director. Special responsibility was delegated to Dr. Charles S. Hyneman.

At the fourth meeting of the Committee on September 24 and 25, 1962, additional recommendations to the Secretary were agreed upon, including the selection and status of the county office managers and the farmer fieldmen, and the formation of USDA county councils. The distribution of responsibility for the preparation of the final draft, and the timing of its presentation to the Secretary were settled. Special functions were assigned to Dr. Hyneman.

Special meetings of the Study Committee were held on October 1 and 3, 1962, and a progress report was presented to the National Agricultural Advisory Commission on October 2, 1962. Two members met with a select group of six State chairmen in Washington, D. C., on October 4, 1962. The Chairman discussed the Committee's work with ASCS personnel present at the Northwest area meeting in Minneapolis on October 5, 1962. Another member held similar discussions at the Midwest area meeting in Indianapolis on October 22, 1962.

The working draft of the Report to the Secretary was prepared under the supervision of the Chairman and the Staff Director, and mailed out to the Study Committee members on October 20, 1962, for their critical review and suggestions.

The Study Committee met on November 1, 1962, reviewed the working draft and discussed it with the Secretary and his associates. It resolved to prepare the final draft of its Report under the supervision of the Chairman. The revised draft of the Report was mailed out to the members of the Committee on November 7, 1962, for their comment, footnoting and dissent. The final formulation was prepared by the Chairman and the Staff Director upon the receipt of the comments from the members of the Study Committee.

PART IV

APPENDIX

TO

STUDY COMMITTEE REPORT

Prepared by
Joseph Hajda, Staff Director
Study Committee, and
Associates

APPENDIX TO STUDY COMMITTEE REPORT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface

The material included in the Appendix is intended to provide the reader with the unpublished documents available to the Study Committee. It includes information in the following categories:

1. Questionnaire Survey
2. Letters from Leading Farm Experts
3. Field Interviews by Study Committee Members
4. Direct Election of ASC County Committees

The Study Committee authorized the selection of materials and the preparation of the Appendix by members of its staff. This authorization does not imply Committee approval of any of the materials, for which the staff members accept complete responsibility.

I. QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

A. INTRODUCTION

One means of obtaining informed opinions from the field was a questionnaire prepared and sent to every fifth ASC county committee chairman, a total sample of 612.* By the cutoff date, replies had been received from 450 chairmen, slightly under 74 percent of the sample.

The returns by ASC area are shown by the table below:

Sample Survey of ASC County Committee Chairmen

Area	Questionnaires		
	Mailed	Returned	
	Number	Number	Percent
Southeast	151	106	70
Midwest	156	129	83
Southwest	125	89	71
Northwest	102	67	66
Northeast	78	54	69
Area not given		5	1
Total	612	450	74

The tabulation and analysis of the returns enabled the staff to prepare papers reporting the attitudes of the ASC county chairmen. The data was reviewed and discussed by the Study Committee, and aided the members in the subsequent deliberations and decisions.

*/ The Staff Director is grateful for the professional assistance and suggestions received in the process of the preparation, tabulation, and analysis of the Questionnaire Survey from the following persons: Charles F. Kiefer of the Management Operations Staff, Clarence J. Hein of the Economic Research Service, Everett H. P. Felber of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, Trienah Meyers of the Statistical Reporting Service, Harvey Martens of the Management Appraisal and Systems Development Office, Taylor V. Henderson of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, and Owen K. Shugars of the Economic Research Service.

B. LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

July 20, 1962

To: Chairmen of ASCS County Committees

From: A. Lars Nelson, Chairman
Study Committee Appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture to Review ASC Committee System

Subject: Evaluation of the Committee System

As you know, Secretary Freeman has invited a committee of outside experts to study problems relating to the responsibilities of farmer-elected community and county committees and of appointed State committees in the administration of farm programs, and to recommend policies that recognize both the importance of local control and participation, and the necessity for the highest standards of efficiency, economy and integrity in carrying out farm programs.

You, as County Chairman, play an important role in this system and we want you to help the Study Committee in its evaluation. Although we do not need your signature, we do need your personal opinion about a number of items. Because of the large number of Chairmen to whom we are writing, we have set the topics into a series of questions — but we invite you also to add any additional comments you would like to make.

The U. S. Department of Agriculture is mailing the letters for us and requests that you send your answers to me in the enclosed envelope.

The Secretary has asked our Study Committee to act promptly, and becuse your response is very important to us in our total review and evaluation, we would appreciate your returning the enclosed form to us within a week of the time you receive it.

Enclosures (2)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Washington, June 27, 1962

Farm, Public Administration Experts to Evaluate Farmer Committee System:

Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman today announced appointment of an eight-man committee of farm and public administration experts to study and evaluate the farmer committee system which administers farm programs at State and local levels.

Six of the appointees are members of the National Agricultural Advisory Commission and two are political scientists. Two members are former Secretaries of Agriculture.

The Secretary designated A. Lars Nelson, Master of the Washington State Grange, as chairman of the study committee.

Other members include:

Claude R. Wickard, Secretary of Agriculture from 1940 to 1945, who now farms near Camden, Ind.

Charles F. Brannan, Secretary of Agriculture from 1948 to 1953, an attorney who lives in Denver, Colo., and is General Counsel to the National Farmers Union.

Charles Hyneman, Professor of Government at Indiana University and President of the American Political Science Association.

Morton Grodzins, Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago. He has served as a consultant to the Hoover Commission in 1948 and President's Commission on National Goals in 1960.

William D. Knox, Editor of Hoard's Dairyman and operator of a dairy farm near Fort Atkinson, Wis.

Charles R. Sayre, Greenwood, Miss., President and General Manager of the Staple Cotton Cooperative Association.

Douglas R. Stanfield, Executive Vice President of the Ohio Farm Bureau.

The study committee has appointed Joseph Hajda, Professor of Political Science at Kansas State University, as the full-time staff assistant to the committee.

Harry B. Caldwell, Chairman of the NAAC and former Master of the North Carolina State Grange, will serve as an ex-officio member of the committee.

The Secretary said he had appointed the committee to evaluate the effectiveness of farm program administration through the farmer committee system.

He noted that since the farmer committees were first established during the early 1930's that many changes had been made in their organization and administrative responsibilities as farm programs and policies developed.

"I have asked this distinguished group of citizens to undertake a thorough study and review of the farmer committee structure and function, and to report to me and to the National Agricultural Advisory Commission their recommendations on measures which can be taken to improve the services made to farmers and to the nation by the elected and appointed farmer committees.

"The committee will seek to determine both the strengths and weaknesses of the farmer committee systems, and to recommend additional legislative or administrative actions which can be taken to add to the effective administration of farm programs.

"The President, in his first message on Agriculture, emphasized the importance of improving the effectiveness of the farmer committee system. A number of actions have been taken by this Administration over the past 18 months to do this, and the work of the study committee now will further this objective."

Principal responsibility for administering farm programs is placed in elected and appointed farmer committees on the State and local levels. State committees are appointed by the Secretary while farmer committees on the county and local levels are elected by farmers in those areas.

USDA 2340-62

C. QUESTIONNAIRE

STUDY OF ASC COMMITTEE SYSTEM 7/20/62

Personal Evaluation by County Chairman: Home State: _____

1. Last year, in 1961, in your county, how did you elect your COMMUNITY COMMITTEE(S)? By — mail ballot? ☐
   or general meeting? ☐
   or polling place? ☐

2. On the whole, do you feel this election method is
   a good method as is? ☐
   should be changed? ☐

3. What do you think is good about the election method you used last year? Why do you think it is good?

   _____

   _____

   _____

4. If you feel the election method should be changed — what do you suggest? Why do you suggest this?

   _____

   _____

   _____

5. Which election method do you favor? mail ballot? ☐
   or general meeting? ☐
   or polling place? ☐
   other? ☐

   which one? _____

6. Do you feel that your community committeemen are well informed about farm programs? all of them are well informed ☐
   most of them are well informed ☐
   some of them are well informed ☐
   none of them are well informed ☐

7. What would you suggest to increase their understanding of farm programs?

   _____

   _____

   _____

8. How do you feel about the selection of the COUNTY COMMITTEE? Do you think it would be best if they were —

   a. appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture? ☐
   b. elected by all eligible farmers in the county? ☐
   c. selected by all community committeemen in the county? ☐
   d. selected by the chairmen of the community committees? ☐
   e. selected by a combination of a. and b. ? ☐
   f. selected by a combination of a. and c. ? ☐
   g. selected by a combination of a. and d. ? ☐

9. Please give reasons for your answer to question #8.

_____

_____

_____

10. Would you favor election of county committeemen for three-year terms of office?

   all elected for 3 years at the same time ☐
   elected for 3 years, with one man elected each year ☐
   in favor of present term of office ☐
   other (specify) _____ ☐

11. Please give reasons for your answer to question #10.

_____

_____

_____

12. As far as development of farm programs is concerned, do you feel that the COUNTY COMMITTEE is — very important? ☐
   somewhat important? ☐
   not important? ☐

13. What do you think the county committees should be expected to do in the development of farm programs?

_____

_____

_____

14. As far as the administration of farm programs is concerned, do you feel that the COUNTY COMMITTEE is — very important? ☐
   somewhat important? ☐
   not important? ☐

15. What do you think the county committee should be expected to do in the administration of farm programs?

_____

_____

16. As far as the delegation to the county committee of responsibility and discretion is concerned, do you feel they should have —

more? ☐
about the same as present? ☐
less? ☐

17. Please explain your answer to question #16.

_____

_____

_____

18. How many days do you devote to your job as county chairman in the ASC county office per year? _____ days

19. How many days a year do you feel you should devote to your job in the ASC county office? _____ days

20. Do you feel that your county committee receives adequate help from your county office manager?

fully adequate ☐
less than adequate ☐
inadequate ☐

21. Please explain your answer to question #20.

_____

_____

_____

22. As far as the authority of the county office managers is concerned, do you feel they should have —

more? ☐
about the same as at present? ☐
less? ☐

23. Please explain your answer to question #22.

_____

_____

_____

24. Is there anything else you would like to see changed or improved as far as the county office manager's job is concerned?

_____

_____

_____

25. How many times a year do you personally meet with the farmer fieldman in your county?_____

26. Do you feel that this is adequate to satisfy your need to do a good job as county chairman?

- fully adequate ☐
- less than adequate ☐
- inadequate ☐

27. Please explain your answer to question #26.

_____

_____

_____

28. Do you feel that your county office manager receives adequate help from the farmer fieldman?

- fully adequate ☐
- less than adequate ☐
- inadequate ☐

29. Please explain your answer to question #28.

_____

_____

_____

30. Is there anything else you would like to see changed or improved as far as the help from your State office is concerned?

_____

_____

_____

31. What do you believe the Washington ASCS office can do to improve farm program development and administration?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

TO HELP US STUDY YOUR ANSWERS, WE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW A LITTLE ABOUT YOU.

32. At present, are you —
a retired farmer? ☐
actively farming? ☐ No. of acres owned at present: _____
No. of acres farmed at present: _____
other? ☐ What? _____

33. If you are actively farming, which is (are) your principal product(s)?

Corn	☐	Dairy	☐
Wheat	☐	Livestock	☐
Tobacco	☐	Cotton	☐
Peanuts	☐	Other	☐ Specify _____
Rice	☐		

34. To date, how many years have you served as a —

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	More
member of a community committee?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	_____
member of a county committee?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	_____
chairman of your county committee?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	_____

35. In which FARM organizations are you a member?
Farm Bureau ☐
Farmers Union ☐
Grange ☐
N. F. O. ☐
Other ☐
Which ones? _____

Not a member ☐

36. Have you ever been an officer of a farm organization?

	County	State	National
Farm Bureau	☐	☐	☐
Farmers Union	☐	☐	☐
Grange	☐	☐	☐
N. F. O.	☐	☐	☐
Other	☐	☐	☐

Which ones? _____

Not an officer ☐

37. What was your age on your last birthday? _____ years.

38. What was your highest grade completed in school?

less than five grades	☐	graduated from college	☐
graduated from grade school	☐	had some graduate work	☐
less than high school	☐	Masters degree	☐
graduated from high school	☐	other _____	☐
less than four years in college	☐		

39. What is your reaction to the present approach of the U. S. Department of Agriculture to the farm problems?

very favorable	☐
favorable	☐
neutral	☐
opposed	☐
very opposed	☐

40. Please explain your answer to question #39.

_____

_____

_____

41. Any other comments you would like to make? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP

D. SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Of the 450 county ASC chairmen who responded to the questionnaire, 89 percent classified themselves as active farmers, 8 percent said they were retired, 2 percent gave some other response, and 1 percent did not answer.

When classified by the size of their farm (adjusted for the area and the type of principal products),* 55 percent of the respondents had medium-sized farms, 19 percent had large farms, and 5 percent had very large farms. At the other extreme, 3 percent had very small farms while 17 percent had small farms.

The respondents reported a wide variety of principal products, as would be expected. The products most frequently listed were livestock (by 68 percent of the respondents), and corn (51 percent). Wheat, dairy products, and cotton followed in that order, while smaller percentages of respondents listed tobacco, peanuts, and rice as their principal products.

Most of the respondents were in the prime of life, with 82 percent of them being between the ages of 40 and 70. About 7 percent were under 40, and 10 percent were over 70.

Some 6 percent of the respondents had graduated from college, while another 3 percent had gone on to do some graduate work. Another 16 percent had attended college but not graduated. Thirty-two percent had stopped their education when they graduated from high school. Thus, altogether, nearly 60 percent of the respondents were high school graduates. Another 20 percent had attended high school but had not graduated. Some 22 percent had only a grade school education.

About 50 percent of the respondents had served on county ASC committees for 7 years or more. Twenty-five percent had served for over 10 years. Fifteen percent had served as county chairman for over 10 years. At the other extreme, 15 percent had served one year or less on county committees, and 17 percent had served one year or less as county chairman.

Membership in farm organizations was common among the respondents. Fifty-four percent were members of the Farm Bureau, 18 percent were members of the Farmers Union, 12 percent were members of the Grange, and 3 percent were members of the N. F. O. Twenty percent reported they were not a member of any farm organization. About 39 percent of the respondents had served as a county officer of one of the farm organizations, and about 3 percent had served as State or national officers.

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*/ Acreage figures are not a precise instrument in establishing the classification of farm size. Yet they can be used by a knowledge specialist without dangerously misleading consequences, especially if he can correlate the number of acres owned, number of acres farmed, the major agricultural products of the farm, and the location of the farm in specific States.

This information was available, and it was reviewed and appraised by a specialist in analysis of type, size, and location of farms in the United States, who prepared the classification of the respondents according to the size of their farms.

The responses show that 65 percent of the respondents favored the use of mail ballots to elect community committeemen, and 71 percent favored selection of the county committees by the chairmen of the community committees. Fifty-three percent favored a three-year term for county committees, with one member to be elected each year. An additional 14 percent favored the three year term, but wanted all committeemen elected at the same time.

Most respondents felt that most of the community committeemen were well informed about the farm programs, but 28 percent of them thought that only some of the community committeemen were well informed and 6 percent thought none of them were.

Eighty-one percent of the respondents thought that the county committee played a very important role in development of the farm programs, while 92 percent felt that the committee played an important role in the administration of the programs. About 35 percent thought that more responsibility and discretion should be delegated to the county committees, while 64 percent felt that the present delegation was about right.

Forty percent of the respondents spent less than 30 days a year in the county ASC offices on official duty, while 11 percent spent over 90 days per year on duty. In general the respondents thought that they should spend more time on duty, with 20 percent saying they should spend more than 90 days on duty. On the other hand, 38 percent thought that less than 30 days were sufficient.

About 90 percent of the respondents reported that the county committee received fully adequate help from the county office manager. Two percent thought the manager should have more authority, 8 percent thought he should have less, and 89 percent thought the present amount was about right.

Thirty eight percent of the respondents reported 6 or less meetings with farmer fieldmen during the year, while 16 percent reported 12 or more meetings per year. About 68 percent of the respondents thought the number of meetings with farmer fieldmen was fully adequate, while 82 percent thought that the county office manager received fully adequate help from the farmer fieldmen.

With respect to their attitude toward the present approach of the Department of Agriculture to farm problems, 29 percent reported their attitude as very favorable, 44 percent as favorable, 10 percent as neutral, 12 percent as opposed, and 2 percent as very opposed.

The tabulations that follow give more details about the responses, and also give a breakdown of the responses by the five ASCS areas. It should be noted that there is some variation from area to area. For example, 25 percent of the respondents in the Southwest area report themselves as opposed to the present approach to farm problems, as compared to only 7 percent opposed in the Northwest and Middlewest areas.

SUMMARY TABULATION OF RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRE

Percentages in the summary that follows are based on 450 responses.

A. Characteristics of County Committee Chairmen responding to questionnaire

1. Active or Retired:

Active farmers	89%
Retired farmers	8%
Others	2%
No response	1%

2. Size of farm (adjusted for area and type of principal products):

Very small	3%
Small	17%
Medium	55%
Large	19%
Very large	5%
No response	1%

3. Principal products of Active Farmers (some respondents listed two or more):

Corn	51%	Dairy	21%
Wheat	37%	Livestock	68%
Tobacco	10%	Cotton	16%
Peanuts	3%	Other	26%
Rice	1%		

4. Length of service on Farmer Committees:

Years of Service	Community Committee	County Committee	Chairmen, County Committee
0	30%	11%	6%
1	8%	4%	11%
2	11%	8%	14%
3-4	16%	15%	19%
5-6	10%	12%	16%
7-8	5%	15%	13%
9-10	6%	10%	6%
over 10	14%	25%	15%

5. Membership in Farm Organizations (some respondents listed two):

54% Farm Bureau
18% Farmers Union
12% Grange
3% N. F. O.
5% Other
20% Not a member

6. Offices Held in Farm Organizations:

	County	State	National
Farm Bureau	23%	2%	0.2%
Farmers Union	5%	-	-
Grange	6%	0.2%	-
N. F. O.	1%	0.2%	-
Other	4%	0.4%	0.2%

Never an Officer 55%

7. Age at Last Birthday:

20-29	0.2%
30-39	7%
40-49	24%
50-59	31%
60-69	27%
70-79	9.3%
80-89	0.5%
No response	1%

8. Education:

Less than five grades	1%
Graduated from grade school	21%
Less than high school	20%
Graduated from high school	32%
Less than four years in college	16%
Graduated from college	6%
Had some graduate work	2%
Masters degree	1%
No response	1%

B. Responses to Questions

1. Method Used in 1961 to Elect Community Committees:

57% by mail ballot
23% by general meeting
19% by polling place
1% no response

2. Community Committee Election Method Favored:

65% mail ballot
19% general meeting
14% polling place
2% no response

3. Feeling About Level of Information of Community Committeemen about Farm Programs:

19% "all of them are well informed"
45% "most of them are well informed"
28% "some of them are well informed"
6% "none of them are well informed"
1% no response

4. County Committee Selection Method Favored:

71% "selected by the chairmen of the community committees"
15% "elected by all eligible farmers in the county"
11% "selected by all community committeemen in the county"
1% "appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture"
1% "selected by a combination of appointment by the Secretary and election by the chairman of the community committees"
1% no response

5. Preference for the Term of Office of the County Committeemen:

53% "all elected for 3 years, with one man elected each year"
27% "in favor of present term of office"
14% "all elected for 3 years at the same time"
4% other
2% no response

6. Feeling on Role of County Committee in Development of Farm Program:

81% "very Important"
12% "somewhat Important"
5% "not Important"
2% no response

7. Feeling on Role of County Committee in Administration of Farm Program:

92% "very important"
7% "somewhat important"
0.2% "not important"
0.8% no response

8. Feeling About Amount of Responsibility and Discretion that Should be Delegated to County Committee:

35% "more"
64% "about the same as present"
0.2% "less"
0.8% no response

9. Days in Office Per Year:

Days	
0-10	5.6%
11-30	35%
31-50	21%
51-70	16%
71-90	11%
91-110	8%
111-130	2%
131-170	1.2%
Over 170	0.2%

10. Days Should be in Office Per Year:

Days	
0-10	16%
11-30	22%
31-50	18%
51-70	15%
71-90	9%
91-110	12%
111-130	3%
131-170	3%
Over 170	2%

11. Feeling About Adequacy of Help Received by County Committee from County Office Manager:

90% fully adequate
7% less than adequate
2.6% inadequate
0.4% no response

12. Feeling About Authority needed by County Office Manager:

2% more
89% same as at present
8% less
1% no response

13. Meetings with Farmer Fieldman:

Times per year	
0-6	38%
7-12	37%
13-18	6%
19-24	6%
25-30	3%
Over 30	1%
No response	9%

14. Adequacy of Number of Meetings with Farmer Fieldman:

68% fully adequate
21% less than adequate
9% inadequate
2% no response

15. Adequacy of help Received by County Office Manager from Farmer Fieldman:

82% fully adequate
13% less than adequate
2% inadequate
3% no response

16. Reaction to present approach of the U. S. Department of Agriculture to the Farm Problems:

29% very favorable
44% favorable
10% neutral
12% opposed
2% very opposed
3% no response

C. Characteristics of County Committee Chairmen by ASCS Areas

1. Active or Retired:

	S. E.	M. W.	S. W.	N. W.	N. E.
Retired	5%	7%	9%	9%	13%
Active	92%	91%	87%	90%	85%
Other	3%	1%	3%	1%	-
No response	-	2%	1%	-	2%

2. Size of Farm (adjusted for area and type of principal products):

	S. E.	M. W.	S. W.	N. W.	N. E.
Very small	3%	5%	1%	1%	4%
Small	18%	15%	17%	18%	15%
Medium	57%	65%	44%	45%	63%
Large	18%	14%	26%	28%	13%
Very large	5%	1%	10%	7%	4%
No response	-	-	2%	-	1%

3. Major products (some respondents listed two or more):

	S. E.	M. W.	S. W.	N. W.	N. E.
Corn	63%	75%	26%	39%	30%
Wheat	15%	47%	43%	60%	20%
Tobacco	18%	16%	-	-	6%
Peanuts	8%	-	2%	-	2%
Rice	5%	-	1%	-	-
Dairy	15%	28%	8%	16%	46%
Livestock	75%	67%	69%	76%	43%
Cotton	49%	-	19%	-	-
Other	37%	19%	26%	24%	24%

4. Years served as Community Committeeman:

Years	S. E.	M. W.	S. W.	N. W.	N. E.
0	41%	19%	46%	15%	26%
1	6%	7%	6%	12%	11%
2	8%	10%	11%	16%	7%
3-4	20%	17%	11%	19%	13%
5-6	9%	12%	6%	12%	13%
7-8	2%	7%	6%	6%	7%
9-10	4%	10%	3%	4%	8%
Over 10	12%	19%	10%	15%	15%

5. Years served as County Committeeman:

Years	S. E.	M. W.	S. W.	N. W.	N. E.
0	13%	12%	10%	6%	6%
1	2%	3%	4%	6%	4%
2	8%	6%	9%	10%	11%
3-4	16%	13%	16%	15%	15%
5-6	11%	14%	9%	16%	15%
7-8	10%	20%	12%	19%	11%
9-10	11%	10%	9%	9%	10%
Over 10	29%	21%	30%	18%	30%

6. Years served as County Chairman:

Years	S. E.	M. W.	S. W.	N. W.	N. E.
0	5%	7%	8%	4%	4%
1	6%	15%	11%	12%	9%
2	14%	12%	12%	18%	15%
3-4	15%	19%	26%	16%	20%
5-6	19%	16%	9%	17%	18%
7-8	10%	14%	10%	16%	13%
9-10	9%	9%	5%	3%	4%
Over 10	23%	8%	18%	12%	17%

7. Membership in Farm Organizations (some respondents listed two):

	S. E.	M. W.	S. W.	N. W.	N. E.
Farm Bureau	75%	51%	55%	21%	59%
Farmers Union	1%	19%	22%	45%	9%
Grange	3%	12%	7%	10%	41%
N. F. O.	-	7%	3%	3%	-
Other	5%	4%	9%	4%	6%
Not a member	22%	19%	20%	24%	15%

8. County Officer in Farm Organizations:

	S. E.	M. W.	S. W.	N. W.	N. E.
Farm Bureau	30%	19%	26%	10%	28%
Farmers Union	1%	2%	4%	13%	7%
Grange	2%	6%	1%	6%	22%
N. F. O.	-	2%	-	-	-
Other	7%	1%	2%	3%	7%
Not an officer	53%	62%	54%	60%	39%

9. State or National Officer in Farm Organizations:

	S. E.	M. W.	S. W.	N. W.	N. E.
Farm Bureau	3%	1%	3%	2%	-
Farmers Union	-	-	-	-	-
Grange	-	1%	-	-	-
N. F. O.	-	2%	1%	-	-
Other	-	2%	-	1%	-

10. Age at last Birthday:

	S. E.	M. W.	S. W.	N. W.	N. E.
20-29	1%	-	-	-	-
30-39	6%	6%	9%	6%	11%
40-49	18%	30%	22%	31%	17%
50-59	36%	29%	26%	34%	28%
60-69	27%	23%	30%	25%	31%
70-79	11%	8%	12%	3%	13%
80-89	-	2%	-	-	-
No response	1%	2%	-	-	-

11. Education:

	S. E.	M. W.	S. W.	N. W.	N. E.
Less than five grades	-	1%	2%	-	-
Graduated from grade school	17%	29%	16%	21%	19%
Less than high school	21%	23%	17%	19%	19%
Graduated from high school	37%	27%	28%	33%	43%
Less than four years in college	13%	12%	26%	16%	15%
Graduated from college	8%	5%	8%	4%	4%
Had some graduate work	4%	2%	1%	3%	2%
Masters degree	-	1%	1%	1%	-
No response	-	-	1%	1%	-

D. Responses to Questions by ASCS Areas:

1. Method Used in 1961 to Elect Community Committees:

	S. E.	M. W.	S. W.	N. W.	N. E.
Mail ballot	68%	22%	91%	37%	89%
General meeting	6%	51%	4%	34%	4%
Polling place	26%	26%	1%	28%	7%
No response	-	-	3%	-	-

Footnote: Some respondents in the Midwest and Northwest areas seemed to confuse the meeting and polling place methods of election.

2. Community Committee Election Method Favored:

	S. E.	M. W.	S. W.	N. W.	N. E.
Mail ballot	75%	41%	87%	52%	85%
General meeting	5%	40%	6%	30%	7%
Polling place	20%	18%	2%	18%	7%
No response	1%	1%	6%	-	-

Footnote: See note to number 1 above.

3. Feeling About Level of Information of Community Committeemen About Farm Programs:

	S. E.	M. W.	S. W	N. W.	N. E.
All well informed	20%	18%	21%	13%	19%
Most well informed	55%	40%	35%	43%	59%
Some well informed	22%	33%	30%	36%	19%
None well informed	4%	9%	8%	7%	4%
No response	-	1%	6%	-	-

4. System Favored for Selection of County Committee:

	S. E.	M. W.	S. W.	N. W.	N. E.
Appointed by Secretary	-	-	1%	1%	2%
Elected by all eligible farmers	8%	10%	29%	16%	11%
Selected by all Community Committee	12%	9%	11%	10%	13%
Selected by Chairman of Community Committee	77%	79%	53%	72%	70%
Various combinations of the above	1%	1%	2%	-	2%
No response	1%	1%	3%	-	2%

5. Preference for the Term of Office for County Committeemen:

	S. E.	M. W.	S. W.	N. W.	N. E.
All elected for 3 years at same time	23%	16%	7%	7%	13%
Elected for 3 years, with one man elected each year	44%	54%	58%	63%	46%
In favor of present term of office	25%	26%	26%	30%	33%
Other	7%	2%	7%	-	4%
No response	1%	2%	2%	-	4%

6. Feeling on Role of County Committee in Development of Farm Program:

	S. E.	M. W.	S. W.	N. W.	N. E.
Very important	80%	84%	79%	81%	81%
Somewhat important	14%	9%	12%	13%	13%
Not important	5%	5%	8%	1%	4%
No response	1%	2%	1%	4%	2%

7. Feeling on Role of County Committee in Administration of Farm Program:

	S. E.	M. W.	S. W.	N. W.	N. E.
Very important	94%	95%	89%	91%	89%
Somewhat important	5%	4%	11%	7%	9%
Not important	1%	-	-	-	-
No response	-	1%	-	1%	2%

8. Feeling about Amount of Responsibility and Discretion that should be delegated to County Committee:

	S. E.	M. W.	S. W.	N. W.	N. E.
More	27%	37%	36%	49%	30%
About the same	72%	62%	63%	48%	70%
Less	1%	-	-	-	-
No response	-	1%	1%	3%	-

9. Days in Office per Year:

Days	S. E.	M. W.	S. W	N. W.	N. E.
0-10	4%	5%	7%	6%	9%
11-30	53%	9%	36%	21%	74%
31-50	29%	20%	19%	15%	15%
51-70	10%	19%	29%	16%	2%
71-90	3%	18%	8%	22%	-
91-110	1%	21%	1%	12%	-
111-130	-	4%	-	6%	-
131-150	-	3%	-	-	-
151-170	-	2%	-	-	-
171 and over	-	-	-	1%	-

10. Days should be in Office Per Year:

Days	S. E.	M. W.	S. W.	N. W.	N. E.
0-10	11%	11%	22%	18%	20%
11-30	35%	5%	21%	10%	54%
31-50	30%	10%	13%	18%	17%
51-70	12%	16%	26%	7%	7%
71-90	6%	12%	10%	15%	2%
91-110	6%	24%	7%	13%	-
111-130	-	6%	-	7%	-
131-150	-	9%	-	3%	-
151-170	-	2%	-	-	-
171 and over	-	5%	-	7%	-

11. Feeling about Adequacy of Help Received by County Committee from County Office Manager:

	S. E.	M. W.	S. W.	N. W.	N. E.
Fully adequate	96%	84%	92%	81%	94%
Less than adequate	3%	12%	3%	13%	6%
Inadequate	1%	3%	4%	4%	-
No response	-	1%	-	1%	-

12. Feeling about Authority needed by County Office Managers:

	S. E.	M. W.	S. W.	N. W.	N. E.
More	3%	1%	6%	-	4%
About the same	95%	84%	88%	88%	91%
Less	1%	14%	6%	12%	6%
No response	1%	1%	1%	-	-

13. Meetings with Farmer Fieldman:

Times per year	S.E.	M.W.	S.W.	N.W.	N.E.
0-6	54%	33%	39%	21%	41%
7-12	34%	39%	33%	42%	39%
13-18	3%	6%	6%	10%	11%
19-24	2%	8%	7%	7%	4%
25-30	-	5%	1%	7%	2%
31 and over	-	2%	-	6%	-
No response	8%	8%	15%	6%	4%

14. Adequacy of Number of Meetings per Year with Farmer Fieldman:

	S.E.	M.W.	S.W.	N.W.	N.E.
Fully adequate	82%	57%	75%	58%	65%
Less than adequate	13%	27%	13%	31%	20%
Inadequate	5%	12%	9%	7%	11%
No response	-	4%	2%	3%	4%

15. Adequacy of Help Received by County Office Manager from Farmer Fieldman:

	S.E.	M.W.	S.W.	N.W.	N.E.
Fully adequate	93%	76%	81%	81%	78%
Less than adequate	6%	16%	12%	15%	17%
Inadequate	1%	2%	3%	1%	-
No response	-	5%	3%	3%	6%

16. Reaction to Present Approach of U.S. Department of Agriculture to the Farm Problems:

	S.E.	M.W.	S.W.	N.W.	N.E.
Very favorable	31%	34%	25%	28%	24%
Favorable	45%	47%	32%	56%	41%
Neutral	7%	9%	15%	4%	20%
Opposed	13%	7%	18%	7%	15%
Very opposed	1%	-	7%	-	-
No response	3%	3%	3%	4%	-

17. Responses of Farm Bureau Officers Only among County Chairmen on Their Reaction to Present Approach of Department to Farm Problems:

(Note: Number of respondents, not percentages)

	S.E.	M.W.	S.W.	N.W.	N.E.
Very favorable	11	9	7	-	-
Favorable	13	10	5	4	8
Neutral	3	2	3	2	4
Opposed	4	3	6	1	3
Very opposed	-	-	1	-	-
No response	1	1	1	-	-

When these responses are combined into two groups, "supporters" and "non-supporters", the Southeast and Midwest areas are 3 to 1 in support of the present approach, and the other areas are evenly divided.

	S.E.	M.W.	S.W.	N.W.	N.E.
Supporters	24	19	12	4	8
Non-supporters	8	6	11	3	7

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS BY RESPONDENTS ON SELECTED QUESTIONS

All of the comments by respondents were read by staff members or members of the Study Committee. However, a shortage of time and staff precluded a detailed analysis of each of the questions that permitted individual comments. Because of the special interest in the methods of elections and the methods of keeping the community committeemen informed about the programs, more detailed analysis was done of the comments about these subjects. The summary and tabulation of the replies to these questions is presented below.

RESPONSES OF COUNTY COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN TO QUESTIONS ABOUT ELECTION OF COUNTY COMMITTEES

In the questionnaire, county chairmen were asked to choose among seven possible different ways of selecting county committees, ranging from appointment by the Secretary of Agriculture to direct election by all eligible farmers in the county. The choices also included combinations of two methods.

Seventy-one percent of the county chairmen choose the present system as best; namely, selection of county committees by the chairmen of the community committees. Fiften percent chose election of the county committee by all eligible farmers in the county, while eleven percent chose selection by all the community committeemen in the county. One percent chose appointment by the Secretary, while an additional one percent chose a combination of appointment by the Secretary and selection by the community committee chairmen.

The respondents to the questionnaire were then asked to give reasons for their choice of methods. They could list as many reasons as they wanted to report, and many of them gave two or three reasons. The tables attached at the end of this report give the reasons listed and the number of times they were listed.

Reasons for Respondents Selecting Present System as Best:

The largest number of respondents listed reasons concerned with the personal characteristics of the community chairmen, indicating that these chairmen were better informed, more capable, and generally better qualified to choose the county committees than were the persons doing the selecting under any of the other possible systems.

The next largest group of frequently cited reasons for using the present system were concerned with the idea that community chairmen are directly chosen by the farmers and thus represented the choice of the individual farmers. Some of the respondents went on to suggest that community chairmen were in the best position to know who the farmers wanted on the county committee, or that the farmers could suggest to the community chairmen the men they would like to see on the county committee.

A somewhat smaller group of responses were concerned with the representation of the various parts of the county, the various communities and areas, the types of farming, and crops. The respondents felt that this type of representation would not be provided by most other systems of selection.

Another group of responses indicated that the reason for retaining the present system was that it was working well and, therefore, no change was needed.

Still another group of responses made the claim that the results were better under this system than under the other possible systems. These responses were about evenly divided between the idea that this system of selection produced better qualified county committeemen, and the idea that this system was relatively free from politics.

Other reasons that received scattered support were that this system keeps control at the local level, is more democratic, is more fair, is simple and easy to operate, and is less expensive than other methods.

A final group of responses, relatively small in number, indicated that appointment of the county committee, and especially appointment by the Secretary of Agriculture, was not acceptable to the respondent and this was one of the reasons why he preferred selection by the chairmen of the community committees.

Reasons for Respondents Choosing Election by All Eligible Farmers as Best:

The second largest group of respondents, fifteen percent, chose election by all the eligible farmers in the community as the best system for selecting the county committees.

The reasons most frequently given for this choice was that it would enable the farmers to directly choose the county committeemen. The respondents felt this direct election to be preferable to any system of indirect election or appointment. Several respondents said that the farmers were directly affected by the decisions of the county committee and hence should have a direct voice in choosing the committee.

Among the reasons less frequently listed were that under the present system of election the actual selection may be made by a minority or clique, may not represent all areas of the county, and may involve personal politics and "logrolling." Still another reason listed was that more farmers would participate in the programs if they had a direct vote in selecting the county committee.

Reasons for Respondents Choosing Election by the Entire Community Committee:

About eleven percent of the respondents chose this method of electing the county committees. The most frequently cited reason for this choice was that the community committeemen were well informed about the qualifications of the present county committeemen and of other candidates, presumably being better informed than other farmers in their communities.

Another group of reasons indicated that the community committeemen would provide a broader base of election than the present system, and would be more representative of the farmers and the townships.

The remaining reasons were suggested by only one or two respondents. Among these reasons are that community committeemen need more duties, and that election by community committeemen would work best in counties that have only a few communities.

Selection by the Secretary of Agriculture:

Two percent of the respondents chose as the best method selection by the Secretary of Agriculture, either alone or in conjunction with the community chairmen. Among the reasons given for this response were that it would result in more competent county committeemen, that it would bring out qualified individuals who would not run for the office, and that it would insure the selection of men who were honestly in favor of the farm programs.

RESPONSES TO QUESTION ABOUT TERM OF OFFICE OF COUNTY COMMITTEEMEN

In the questionnaire, county committee chairmen were asked to choose between alternative lengths of term for county committeemen, or to suggest another alternative. The choices specified were those most commonly suggested in the past; namely, a three-year term with one member chosen each year, or a three-year term with all members elected at the same time. The present term of office (which is one year) was the other choice listed.

Just about half (53%) of the respondents favored the three-year term, with one member elected each year. A substantial minority (27%) favored the present one-year term.

A smaller minority (14%) favored a three-year term with all members selected at the same time. About four percent of the respondents suggested a different alternative, about half of them suggesting a two-year term with all members elected at the same time.

Thus, a substantial majority favors terms of longer than one year. At the same time, respondents are more evenly divided upon the merits of electing all members at the same time as compared to electing them for staggered terms, with one member elected each year.

It was evident from the comments that the respondents were concerned about a question not asked in the questionnaire; namely, whether county committee members should be limited in the number of terms they could serve. Perhaps this partly reflects the reaction to the attempt to limit the terms of office in 1954, which was rejected by Congress. In part, however, it also reflects a serious concern on the part of the respondents over the question of whether a limit on the number of terms ought not to exist. Because the questionnaire did not ask this specifically, no statement can be made about the choice of the respondents on this question. However, it is evident from the responses that many of them were thinking about this question in connection with their answers to the question about the length of term for county committeemen.

Reasons for Favoring the Three-Year Staggered Term:

By far the largest group of reasons given for choosing the three-year term with one member elected each year were reasons concerned with the value of experience on the county committee. This was stated positively that under this system there would almost always be experienced men on the committee. It was also stated negatively that an entirely new, inexperienced committee would make unnecessary errors. A smaller group of respondents felt that an inexperienced committee would be hard for others in the ASCS programs to work with, while a still smaller group (three respondents) pointed to the possibility that an entirely new committee would abdicate its responsibilities to the county office manager.

The other large group of reasons for favoring this system were concerned primarily with the three-year term, and would be equally applicable to the choice in which all three county members were elected at the same time. This group of answers stressed the complexity of the program and the fact that it took a considerable length of time (most respondents indicated at least one year) to learn the job of county committeemen. A relatively small group felt the term was desirable because it would enable the county committees to have a more stable program and more consistent policy from one year to the next.

A miscellaneous group of reasons ranged from the fact that this system was used by most other groups and Boards to the simple statement that this system would be better.

Reasons for Choosing the Present System as Best:

More different reasons were offered for this choice than for any of the others, indicating a wide scattering of ideas about why the present system was best.

The largest group said the basic advantage of this system is that if an incapable or bad county committeeman is elected, the mistake can be corrected sooner than under any other system. A number of respondents added that at the same time those committeemen doing a good job could be re-elected. The annual election also was viewed as an advantage to the county committeemen in that they could find out whether the voters approved of their programs.

The next largest group simply stated that the system had been working well and they saw no reason to change it.

A relatively small group felt that changing conditions and changing programs made it necessary to permit changing the county committees more frequently than every three years.

Still another group felt that annual elections were a useful way of stirring up interest in the programs both on the part of farmers and on the part of community committeemen.

Other responses were widely scattered and cannot easily be summarized; however, there were some very interesting reasons offered, and they may be found listed in the Appendix.

Reasons for Choosing a Three-Year Term, All Members Elected at the Same Time:

The largest group of reasons offered were identical with some of the reasons for favoring the three-year staggered term. Respondents said that the program was so complex that a longer term such as three years was necessary to become adequately familiar with it and then be able to act on the basis of adequate knowledge.

A somewhat smaller group favored the three-year term because it would enable the county committees ample time to plan and carry out policies, and would result in better administration at the county level.

Another small group favored the three-year term because it was less expensive than shorter terms because the expense of elections would come only one-third as often.

The rest of the reasons were offered by only one or two respondents, and differed widely. They may be found in the Appendix.

Reasons for Choosing Other Alternatives:

As was noted earlier, only four percent of the respondents chose to list another alternative. Most of this group suggested a two-year term with election of all members at once. The reasons were generally similar to those for a three-year term; namely, that it takes time to learn the job, and fewer elections would save money.

Two of the respondents favored an indefinite term, while one favored appointment for a three-year term, with one member being appointed each year.

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS ABOUT THE DIFFERENT METHODS OF ELECTION OF COMMUNITY COMMITTEES

The county committee chairmen to whom the questionnaire was sent were asked which of the three permitted election methods was used last year (1961) in their county. Fifty-seven percent (257) of the respondents reported that the Mail Ballot was used. Twenty-three percent (104) reported that the General Meeting was used, and nineteen percent (86) reported the use of the Polling Place method.

Eighty-seven percent of the respondents said they were satisfied with the method that had been used in their county. The percentage of satisfied respondents by method used was: Mail ballot 96 percent; general meeting 82 percent; and polling place 66 percent.

Twelve percent of the respondents reported that they thought the method should be changed.

Those respondents who reported the method used in their county was satisfactory were asked to give reasons for this response. Many of them gave more than one reason.

Of those who reported the use of the Mail Ballot method as satisfactory, the largest number gave as a reason the fact that more voters participate in the Mail Ballot method than in the other two. A second major response was that the Mail Ballot was preferable because it gave every farmer a chance to vote. Another fairly large group stressed that this method was more convenient, less costly and did not involve a trip away from home for the voters. Another group of reasons clustered around the idea of a secret ballot and that the farmer had time to consider his vote and could make up his mind without outside interference.

Among the respondents reporting use of the General Meeting method as satisfactory, one group stressed that only the most interested and responsible farmers attended the meeting, while another group of responses added that the committeemen elected at the meeting were interested in the farm program and were willing to serve on the committee. Another feature chosen for mention was that no prior nominating had taken place and those attending the meeting had a free choice among potential candidates. Another group of responses stressed the usefulness of the meeting method for explanation and discussion of the program for the coming year by the county committee and the farmers, while a similar cluster of responses said it was useful for the farmers to get together and discuss their problems, the ASCS program, candidates and other personnel.

In general, the reasons given by those respondents who reported satisfaction with the Polling Place method were similar to those listed for the General Meeting method. The ones most frequently listed were attendance of the more interested farmers, the election of men interested in the programs, the open nominations, and the opportunity for farmers to talk together before the election.

Of those respondents who suggested a change to a different method for their counties, sixty-five percent suggested a change to the Mail Ballot method from the other two. The most frequently listed reason was that the change would increase voter participation in the elections (listed by thirty respondents). No other reason for a change in the system was listed by more than two respondents.

SUMMARY TABULATION OF RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ABOUT ELECTIONS

8a. Appointment by the Secretary of Agriculture

2 Better qualified men would be willing to serve. The men who would do the best job are very busy and will not make any effort to get elected, but would accept an appointment.

1 To get men who are honestly behind the farm program.

Related Responses from 8b, 8c, 8d:

FROM 8b:

1 Should not be appointed by the Secretary.

FROM 8c:

1 Elective system better than appointive.

1 Appointment by anyone would be disastrous.

1 Secretary of Agriculture does not know people in the counties.

1 Should be done at the local level, not from Washington.

FROM 8d:

1 Secretary should not appoint, as politics could enter the picture.

4. Leave Secretary out; politics is detrimental to local USDA affairs; would bring in politics.

3 I would not recommend appointment by Secretary at all.

3 Should never be appointed.

2 Secretary of Agriculture should not be in county affairs.

1 Secretary cannot have knowledge of local affairs.

1 However, appointment by Secretary of Agriculture would add to prestige and pride of county committee.

1 However, if recommendations for appointment were made to Secretary of Agriculture by persons knowing the ability of the appointee to work on the program, this would be a better method.

8b. Election by all Eligible Farmers

20 Farmers would have a direct choice of county committeemen. (Not overrepresent sparsely settled communities.)

3 The farmers know the people they are putting in the job.

2 Too often under present system, the county committee is elected by a minority or clique.

2 More representative, because chosen by a majority of the farmers.

7 The farmers are affected by program decisions, and should have a vote (farmers are more interested and affected by programs).

1 Should be elected by all farmers, instead of selected by the community chairmen for their personalities and politics.

2 Less chance of logrolling.

3 More fair and unbiased method.

3 More democratic.

1 More representative.

1 Would stop most of the criticism.

1 Should be more like the community election.

2 More farmers would show interest if they could vote for County Committee (more farmers would cooperate).

3 Community chairmen should serve as a nominating committee.

1 Would work because there are only a few farmers left in the county.

1 Should not be appointed by the Secretary.

8c. Elected by All Community Committeemen

14 Better informed on qualifications of present county committeemen and of other farmers to be considered.

9 Represent farmers in their community.

6 More representative of township.

4 Broader base of election than present system.

1 Community chairmen are so few that political maneuvering is possible.

1 Fair and impartial.

1 Would result in more cooperation.

2 Present system has worked very well.

2 Committeemen (community) need some experience (more to do).

1 Smaller, more workable group than all farmers.

1 However, would be more costly.

1 Best for a small county with three or fewer communities.

1 Elective system better than appointive.

1 Appointment by anyone would be disastrous.

1 Secretary of Agriculture does not know the people in the counties.

1 Should be done at the local level, not from Washington.

8d. By Chairmen of the Community Committees (Present System)

PRESENT SYSTEM WORKING WELL; NO NEED TO CHANGE:

29 Present system working very well.

CHAIRMEN ARE THE CHOICE OF THE FARMERS:

56 Community chairmen represent the farmers of each community.

12 Chairmen are elected by popular vote (includes six who indicate that in their communities the person receiving the most votes becomes chairman).

15 Chairmen know the voters' choices for county committee.

4 Farmers can suggest to chairmen who they want for county committee.

2 All three community committeemen should discuss their choices, and chairmen should cast the vote.

CHAIRMEN ARE UNIQUELY QUALIFIED TO SELECT COMMITTEES:

50 Chairmen know available candidates and whether they are qualified.

35 Chairmen are better informed, more capable, best qualified.

26 Chairman an outstanding farmer; leader in the community.

REPRESENTATION OF AREAS, CROPS, ETC.:

24 Represent all parts of the county (areas, crops, types of farming).

7 Represents county as a whole; representation of the whole county; equal representation.

5 Best representation.

2 Gives each community in the county an equal chance.

RESULTS ARE BETTER IF THIS METHOD IS USED:

9 This method provides more qualified men (more dedicated) for county committee.

1 If a county committeeman gets out of line, he is soon replaced.

10 Helps keep the selection free of politics.

1 Is bipartisan.

2 Chairmen will not be guided by political considerations.

1 Present system (vs. b & c) keeps it less out of politics.

LOCAL CONTROL, DEMOCRATIC, FAIR:

7 Keeps selection at the local level (under local control).

8 Democratic (and is system used in our general elections (!)).

4 Fair and democratic.

4 Fair

SIMPLICITY AND EASE OF OPERATION:

8 Decisions made easier by smaller group (more responsible).

9 Simple (orderly, less confusion).

3 Not unduly cumbersome (time and people).

EXPENSE

12 Less expensive.

1 Not unduly expensive.

REASONS OTHER METHODS NOT CHOSEN:

1 Secretary should not appoint, as politics could enter the picture.

3 Leave Secretary out; politics is detrimental to local USDA affairs; would bring in politics.

1 I would not recommend appointment by Secretary at all.

3 Should never be appointed.

2 Secretary of Agriculture should not be in county affairs.

1 Secretary cannot have knowledge of local affairs.

1 However, appointment by Secretary of Agriculture would add to prestige and pride of county committee.

1 However, if recommendations for appointment were made to Secretary of Agriculture by persons knowing the ability of the appointee to work on the program, this would be a better method.

1 Any other method, probably a new county committee every year.

8e. None

8f. None

8g. Combination of Appointment by Secretary of Agriculture and Election by Community Chairmen

1 No reason given.

1 We would have better committeemen.

1 Secretary of Agriculture would insure it would be a competent individual, and the community chairmen would keep it from being a political appointment.

1 Choice by the top men in the community, with the Secretary of Agriculture having final authority; will help keep down too much local politics, and will keep undesirables off the county committee.

1 Would weed out committeemen and office managers who are dragging their feet because of political reasons.

1 Would strengthen the position of the county committee by having the endorsement of the Secretary of Agriculture.

8h. (Added by respondent)

1 By a combination of community committees and the county committee.

1 By a combination of election by all the farmers and election by the community committee.

(No reasons given.)

10a. Three-Year Term, All Elected at Same Time

TIME TO LEARN THE JOB:

26 Allows enough time to become adequately familiar with the programs.

15 One year is too short a time to learn about the programs.

3 Provides a chance to fully understand the farmer's problems.

BETTER JOB DONE:

7 Better administration (would do a better job).

5 Ample time to plan and carry out program (policies).

LESS EXPENSIVE:

16 More economical (less cost than for annual elections).

4 Would eliminate holding elections each year (farmers are tired of them).

MISCELLANEOUS REASONS:

2 Better chance for committee members to plan farm work at home, adjust private affairs.

2 County, State, and Federal officials are elected for more than one year.

2 Less burdensome (did not specify to whom).

1 Sometimes too much politics involved in one-year terms.

2 Means should be provided to remove any who were unsatisfactory.

1 You may lose good men. (!)

1 Would create more interest in committee election.

10b. Three-Year Staggered Term, One Member Elected Each Year

EXPERIENCED MEMBERS ARE NEEDED:

128 There would always be experienced men on the committee (to help guide and train a newly elected man).

44 A completely new, inexperienced committee is undesirable because it would make errors that could be avoided with experience.

5 A committee of new members would have too much to learn and would be hard to work with.

3 Too often, when there are two or more members with no knowledge of duties, it leaves the office manager in complete charge of decisions.

TAKES TIME TO LEARN THE JOB:

61 It takes a considerable time (at least one year) to learn the job of committeeman because the programs are complex. The three-year term provides for two years or more of effective use of what has been learned.

1 Permits committeemen to get better acquainted with State and Federal officials.

7 Permits a more stable program because policy won't change too fast, and commitments to farmers can be made good.

MISCELLANEOUS REASONS:

2 More incentive for good men to serve on county committee.

1 Would also continually bring new ideas into the committee.

1 Would help in promoting the programs.

1 Helps prevent local partisan politicing.

4 It is the practice followed by most other groups and Boards (and other public offices).

2 Less paper work (all that work every year).

2 No person should be eligible for two successive terms.

2 Limit to two consecutive terms.

1 The community committee delegates tend to elect the same county committee year after year, the county office manager using his influence.

1 However, the present system has the advantage that if a mistake has been made in choosing a committeeman, it doesn't take three years to correct.

1 Would be better.

1 It might be a good idea to elect community committees every three years.

10c. In Favor of Present Term

REMOVAL OF UNSATISFACTORY MEN AND CONTROL OVER COMMITTEE:

49 If incapable or bad committeeman is elected, can be changed sooner. (In our county, we had a third member who was worthless, not interested in anything except the pay; heaven help us if we would have been stuck with him for three years.)

9 Yet if the committeeman is doing a good job, he can be re-elected.

5 Gives farmers more control over county committeemen.

4 Keeps members of committee more immediately responsible; gives them an opportunity to know if their programs are satisfactory; members should stand the test of election each year.

WORKING WELL AT PRESENT:

19 Has worked well in our county.

CHANGING CONDITIONS:

8 Permits voters more frequent choice.

3 Due to changing farm programs, a man who may be good in one situation may not be effective in another. A one-year term allows election of a man who will meet current needs.

3 Changing conditions; too many things may happen in a three-year period. Thinking of farmers or committee may change.

MISCELLANEOUS REASONS:

1 New blood and new ideas needed from time to time.

1 Takes time to acquire knowledge of program to administer it properly.

1 It takes several years to acquire knowledge of regulations, and an entirely new committee would be handicapped the first year.

1 Permits a minority group in the county to place a man on the county committee.

1 More fair.

2 More democratic.

3 Committeemen should be allowed to serve as long as delegates re-elect them.

1 Can also be removed by ASCS State committee.

2 Some men cannot accept three-year term because of farming operations.

1 We have trouble getting seomone who will take the job; three-year term would make it more difficult.

5 Annual elections make for greater interest in the election and programs.

1 More interest shown by committeemen if elections are annual.

1 Results in keeping better informed committeemen.

1 Better working relations exist between county committee members when all are elected for one-year terms.

2 Never more than one member should be changed annually; we keep an anchor man.

1 Committeemen with more experience will do a better job.

1 It could cause the defeat of a good committeeman if elected for only a certain term such as three years. (!)

1 If the work is new to them (an entire new committee) they become a rubber stamp for the office manager.

1 County committeemen come from the ranks of community committeemen and don't need a long orientation period.

10d. Other Methods of Election of County Committee

A. Indefinite Time

1 If you have a good man you can keep him; if you don't you can get rid of him. (However, this respondent was opposed to appointment of committee members.)

1 Should not be limited in length of service he could render.

B. One-Year Term (!)

1 A yearly term may be best.

1 If can be changed each year, less chance for political control.

1 Can change them if not doing a good job if all elected each year.

C. Two-Year Term

1 Two-year term, with one being elected each year thereafter. (!)

1 Voters tire of annual election.

1 All who will serve should, so they will understand the program.

1 Learn more about the program.

1 Election expense cut in half.

1 Two-year term, elect all three at once. Saves money. Takes two years to learn duties and responsibilities.

D.1 Two- or three-year term, without limit on successive terms; experienced committeemen can do the best job.

E.1 Appointed for three-year term, one each year.

3. Used Mail Ballot; No Change Suggested

INTEREST IN ELECTION AND VOTER PARTICIPATION:

151 More voters participate in election.

34 Gives every farmer a chance to vote.

2 Contact more farmers

1 More people are conscious of the election.

CALIBRE OF COMMITTEE:

5 Get better qualified committeemen.

6 Most persons elected by this method are interested in programs.

DEMOCRACY AND PROCEDURE:

10 More representative vote.

29 Convenience (to voters).

9 Less costly.

4 No trip for farmers.

5 Farmers have more time to consider their vote.

10 Farmer can make up his mind without outside interference.

1 Harder to tamper with politically.

7 Secret ballot.

1 Helps to eliminate politics in the election.

1 Faster for office force and county committee.

3 Simple and quick.

1 Does not cause any bad feelings.

2 Mail ballots can be picked up and voted by someone else (more opportunity for fraud).

8 Fair and democratic.

1 Cost less than polling places.

1 The community knows these men best.

NOMINATIONS:

1 Has panel of nominees from which to choose, or can write-in candiates of his own choice.

1 Has a selection from among ten men willing to serve as committemen.

1 The only objection to nominations was that most community chairmen left their names off the ballot; therefore, we got fourteen new chairmen.

PROGRAM EXPLANATIONS:

5 Creates more interest in farm programs.

MISCELLANEOUS:

1 Less criticism of election.

1 ASCS has all the responsibilities, instead of other agencies.

1 In large, sparsely-populated county, farmers prefer it to meeting or polling place.

1 Prefer it to other methods.

1 Except hold election every three years.

3. Used Meetings; No Change Suggested

INTEREST OF VOTERS AND OF PERSONS ELECTED:

13 The most interested and responsible persons come to meeting-type elections (can be depended upon for help in the field).

4 More interest shown in an election of this type; more farmers participate if they can gather at their own town hall to vote.

3 Give all farmers interested in promoting their own welfare a chance to select the best people to represent them.

14 Persons interested in the farm program are elected, and are willing to serve on committees. (Get higher calibre committeemen.)

1 Before this year, we used mail ballots, but the persons elected were the ones that were least interested in the program.

DEMOCRACY AND PROCEDURE:

1 Establishes equality of voting.

4 Most democratic (real democracy).

2 Secret ballot.

2 Gives every farmer a chance to vote.

2 A public meeting.

2 Better representation within a district.

2 Simple and inexpensive.

2 As little expense as possible.

1 Prompt results.

1 Takes less of farmers' time.

1 Gives community committeemen some responsibilities.

1 Workload for office personnel is less.

NOMINATIONS:

13 Free choice—no prior nominating (each person can nominate a person of his choice) (—and if necessary change their ideas after talking with a neighbor).

1 Everybody has a chance to run.

3 Equal opportunity to participate in selection.

PROGRAM EXPLANATIONS:

8 Gives county committee an opportunity to discuss and explain the year's program (educate the producer) (create interest in the program).

2 Gives county committee an opportunity to meet the farmers personally; ideas can be exchanged.

1 Give community committeemen a better understanding of the program.

13 Gives farmers a chance to get together and discuss problems, the ASCS program, candidates and other personnel.

1 SAME, and elect the most qualified representatives.

MISCELLANEOUS:

1 Gives the voter the opportunity to vote without being pressured by political groups.

1 Major weakness is poor participation due to fact that for several years the community committee has had very little consideration in program affairs (but continue meeting system anyhow).

1 There would be more participation if the community committees were used in the program (but continue the meeting system anyhow).

1 Farmers should see and talk to the men that they vote for; too many people vote by mail for people they never heard of (this county recently changed from the mail ballot).

3. Used Polling Place; No Change Suggested

INTEREST IN ELECTIONS AND VOTER PARTICIPATION:

14 Brought out those farmers who were interested (the most interested).

4 Those who came were interested in putting good men in office.

2 All eligible voters have the opportunity to vote.

2 All interested and eligible voters have the opportunity to vote.

1 Chance to vote for the man they want.

1 We led the State (North Carolina) in number of farmers voting last year.

1 Because some farmers will not return mail ballots.

1 Voting by mail gets votes from people who are not interested.

CALIBRE OF COMMITTEE:

4 Under this system, elect man interested in the program.

1 The best men in the community are on the ballot.

DEMOCRACY AND PROCEDURE:

1 Everyone votes on the same day.

1 The election is completed in one day.

2 Fairest method.

1 You can explain election procedures and check qualifications of voters.

2 Standard form of election; ballot not cast at a polling place is not an election.

5 Most democratic.

1 A good method.

1 Simple, quick.

1 Seems to work better than mail ballot.

NOMINATIONS:

4 It gives all farmers an equal chance to nominate the man of his choice.

7 Gives farmers a chance to talk it over before the election; more opportunity to choose capable committeemen.

1 The farmer has a chance to vote for his second choice as committeeman.

PROGRAM EXPLANATIONS:

1 Gives opportunity to tell voters about ASCS programs.

2 Personal contact with farmers; each has the opportunity to express his opinions.

1 Community committee should be elected in the community that they represent; anyone opposed to policies of ASCS can then voice their objections to their community committeeman.

2 By going to a polling place, each voter feels he is making a greater contribution to community project and effort.

3. Used General Meeting; Suggested Change To:

A. Mail Ballot:

11 More people will vote.

1 More representative.

1 Give more farmers a chance to vote.

1 Insure secrecy.

1 For purposes of economy.

1 No reasons, but favor township (community) committee as the nominating committee.

B. Polling Place:

1 Open all day and gives farmer more time to vote.

1 For the convenience of the farmer.

C. No change, but:

1 The nominations should be orally from the floor to save time and confusion.

3. Used Polling Place; Suggested Change To:

A. Mail Ballot:

19 Will increase participation.

2 Gives everyone a chance to vote.

1 Get more eligible men to work in the program.

B. Meeting:

1 Will get most interested farmers out to vote because of the instructions about the program.

C. No change, but:

1 Eight hours voting time, not just a certain hour.

3. Used Mail Ballot; Suggested Change To:

A. Meeting or Polling Place:

1 More able men would be nominated.

1 "Possibly a general meeting would be better."

1 If they are interested, they should not mind going to a meeting or polling place to vote.

1 To a general meeting, for a county with less than 100 farmers.

B. No change, but:

1 Nominate by county agent and farm leaders, because any person can now ask a farmer to sign a petition and his name is placed on the ballot.

1 Nominate by county committee; farmers will not prepare petitions.

1 Eliminate the petitions.

SUGGESTIONS TO INCREASE THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE COMMUNITY COMMITTEEMEN ABOUT FARM PROGRAMS

The county committee chairmen were asked to offer their suggestions on increasing the understanding of the farm programs among the community committeemen. As there were no limitations given, the answers were many and varied. For further study, these answers have been classified under general heading with many variations falling under these major classifications. The tables attached at the end of this report give these many variations and the number of times that they were listed. Also shown under each classification are comments made by the farmers in lieu of their suggestions or in reference to them.

MEETINGS

The most numerous response was that of having more meetings. General meetings were suggested as well as educational and instructional meetings. It was frequently suggested that the community committeemen meet more often with the county committee. Briefing sessions and conferences with the Office Manager and State personnel (including farmer fieldmen) were also highly requested. To allocate more funds for having committee meetings was stressed as well as pay for attending briefing sessions. A good majority suggested training periods or meetings with question and answer periods at which the committeemen could openly discuss the farm programs and their most recent changes.

INFORMATION

The need for keeping the community committeemen well informed was made apparent, as it ranked second only to meetings. Many types of information were suggested including news letters, field tours, and visual aids.

BETTERING THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERFORMANCE

Many methods were suggested as to the improvement of the committeemen's performance, which would in turn help the community committeemen understand the farm programs. This classification includes the committeeman's participation, improvement of personnel, improvement of the farm programs, and many other miscellaneous suggestions.

MEETINGS

22 More funds allocated so as to have periodical community committee meetings.

53 More meetings for community committeemen.
- 48 periodical meetings
- 1 monthly meetings
- 4 quarterly meetings

6 Meeting of community committee to explain any additions or alterations to the farm program.
- 4 periodical meetings
- 1 quarterly meetings
- 1 meetings with pay

52 Meetings of community committee and county committee to explain programs.
- 40 periodical meetings
- 7 quarterly meetings
- 5 monthly meetings

4 Periodical meeting of chairman of each community committee with county committee.

7 More meetings on county level.

2 More meetings on State and county level.

1 More county meetings where the entire meetings were devoted to only one phase of the ASCS total program (such as 1/2 day to ACP, 1/2 day to feed grain, etc.).

2 Have periodical informative county-wide meetings which will pay for attendance.
- 1 periodical meetings
- 1 quarterly meetings

2 Better education program.

38 More educational meetings for community committeemen.
- 35 periodical meetings
- 1 semi-annual meetings
- 1 one-half day meeting monthly
- 4 paid meetings

6 Series of meetings for committeemen for discussions and question and answer periods on each program.
- 5 periodical meetings
- 1 series of six meetings

3 An instructional meeting soon after the community committeemen go into office.

2 All committeemen meet after each election and at least once more each year.

MEETINGS (2)

2 Special county-wide meeting at the beginning of the year with movies and other aids to explain program.

8 Special meeting for training committeemen.

1 Day of explanations by trained technicians from state or district level. A question and answer period provided.

1 Meeting to inform the Community Committee before the education meeting in the county.

1 One day school for each program.

1 More schooling as was done in the late 1930's and early 1940's.

5 Community committeemen called to sit in on meetings of county committee.
- 2 periodical meetings
- 2 quarterly meetings
- 1 two community committeemen per county meeting

COMMENTS ABOUT MEETINGS

1 More talk about program and less about politics at the annual meeting.

4 Hold regular stipulated meetings

1 There should be monthly meetings of county and community committeemen because the community committeemen are a working link between the farmer and county committeemen.

1 There is a definite need for more meetings. The community committeemen do not work with enough of the various programs to have much knowledge of them. They do not understand much more about farm programs than the other farmers of the community.

1 There is a need for meetings of the community committeemen with the county committee using literature from USDA for general discussion of all farm programs. This creates better understanding and public relations.

1 Most meetings are dreadful bores because there is too much conversation that is irrevalent and repetitious. Films and such would make the meetings much more interesting.

1 It is generally felt that all community committeemen have first hand knowledge of all programs and that there are enough meetings as it is.

INFORMATION

21 More information made available (field tours, visual aids, radio messages, letters, and newspapers).

1 More literature about programs and changes from State and County Offices

24 Periodic News letter

11 News letter from County Office Manager
- 5 Bi-weekly
- 2 Monthly
- 4 Periodically

5 More information from state
- 3 Periodically
- 1 Monthly
- 1 Bi-weekly

2 News letters and any publicity material from State Office and Washington Office pertaining to farm programs.

1 T.V. Programs explaining work

1 Weekly space in local newspaper

COMMENTS ABOUT INFORMATION

1 There should be a program to counteract Farm Bureau propaganda so that the committeemen would better understand program.

1 Unbiased information is limited in some areas because the Farm Periodicals and press have definite policies determined by controlling political or business interests.

1 Informational material sent out is not always read and studied.

1 The press has created an unfavorable impression of the farm programs among the community committeemen.

1 The information the community committee gets is not explained so that they may pass it on to the farmers correctly.

1 The application and use of laws and rules must be explained to the community committeemen in terms he understands

2 There should be an opportunity to learn about each program. The community committeemen have frequent opportunities to explain the programs to their neighbors, and to answer their neighbor's questions.

BETTERING THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERFORMANCE

10 Simplify programs and procedures

1 Secure a more stable farm program so there will be fewer changes and amendments

1 Make no amendments to a program after it has been presented

2 Secure a long term program and set of rules and regulations and make them available to committees. Make very few yearly changes.

1 Washington must see that these programs are worked out ahead of time and not months late as has been the case lately.

3 The nominating committee should be more careful about selecting persons for ballot.

1 The following should be required of community and county committeemen:
a. Full time farmers
b. Above normal farming operation

18 More use of the community committeemen

5 More detail work by community committeemen

1 Use the community committeemen as under the AAA

1 Interest in the programs should be built up.

2 Committeemen should have more active participation in current operations at local level

5 Committeemen should have more participation in the different programs.

2 Committeemen should spend more time studying the programs

6 Committeemen should read the available literature

2 Increase pay of community committeemen

13 Pay the committeemen for attending meetings

4 Community committeemen's term to exceed more than one year

1 Change in county and community committee at least every two years.

4 Chairman of community committee should receive memos of changes from State Office first hand

3 Community committeemen should have closer contact with the county office and with the State office

1 There should be a closer relationship with ASCS personnel and the farmers.

COMMENTS ABOUT BETTERING THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERFORMANCE

1 The community committeemen should pay careful attention to the radio and newspaper accounts which would then permit them to draw their own unbiased conclusions.

1 The community committeemen should serve more than one year so that the farmers would know who their community committeemen are.

1 There should be a better understanding about the need of a farm program

1 The interest of the community committeemen depends on how good the farm program is. A good program like our present one creates large interest.

2 The program changes so fast that is almost impossible to keep the community committeemen properly informed on the latest changes.

1 A daily study of the farm program is required to understand the complicated procedure.

2 There should be more use of the community committeemen. Therefore, better qualified men with greater interest would accept the position.

1 The community committeemen need better education. It should be explained to them that with a control economy, it is necessary to control agriculture.

1 Community committees are the backbone of ASC programs.

MISCELLANEOUS

71 No answer

8 No suggestions because their committeemen understand the program very well

1 No suggestions because nothing can be done to improve their understanding.

E. LETTER OF APPRECIATION

September 26, 1962

To: Chairmen of ASCS County Committees

From: A Lars Nelson, Chairman
Study Committee Appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture to Review ASC Committee System

Subject: Appreciation for Contribution and Cooperation

I want to thank most sincerely all Chairmen of ASCS County Committees who responded to our letter of July 20, 1962, and answered our questions, added their comments, and returned the questionnaire to us. The contribution and cooperation of county Chairmen was greatly appreciated by all the Members of the Study Committee appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture to review the ASC Committee System. The opinions of the Chairmen were tabulated and analyzed by the Study Committee, and were of considerable help to the evaluation of the operations of the farmer committees.

The assistance and counsel of the county Chairmen made it possible to recommend improvements in the administration of farm programs authorized by law, and was greatly appreciated.

II. LETTERS FROM LEADING FARM EXPERTS

A. INTRODUCTION

Between July 11 and 19, 1962, letters were sent by the Chairman of the Committee to 212 agricultural leaders who were officials of associations of soil and water districts, State departments of agriculture, State agricultural extension services, and farmer cooperatives. Replies were received from 119 persons from 48 States and Puerto Rico. The table below gives the distribution of the replies by ASCS areas:

NUMBER OF LETTERS WITH COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

	AREA					
	N. E.	N. W.	M. W.	S. W.	S. E.	Total
State Extension Directors	10	9	7	6	8	40
State Commissioners of Agriculture	7	7	4	7	5	30
Leading Officials of National and State Associations of Soil and Water Districts	4	11	5	2	4	26
Leading Officials of Farmer Cooperatives	6	4	6	4	3	23
Total	27	31	22	19	20	119

The replies included a wide range of comments and suggestions. Without exception, they were constructive and thought provoking. The extensive excerpts that follow were made available to the members of the Study Committee, who gave them most careful consideration. Some members of the Study Committee also made use of the complete file of the original letters.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

B. LETTER OF REQUEST

July 11, 1962

Dear Sir:

I am writing to you on behalf of a study committee appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman to evaluate the effectiveness of farm program administration through the ASC committee system. The committee is composed of nine farm and public administration experts, seven of whom are members of the National Agricultural Advisory Commission. The Secretary asked our study committee to undertake a thorough review of the farmer committee structure and function, and to report to him and to the National Agricultural Advisory Commission our recommendations on measures which can be taken to improve the services made to farmers and to the nation by the elected and appointed farmer committees.

I would like to invite you to send me your comments which may help our study committee to determine both the strengths and weaknesses of the ASC Committee System, and to recommend actions which can be taken to add to the effective administration of farm programs.

I want to thank you for your cooperation. With my very best wishes, I am.

Sincerely yours,

A. Lars Nelson
Chairman
Study Committee
Room 12-W

C. Excerpts from letters from State Extension Service Directors

1. "Our county agents serve as advisory members of county committees and my office is represented on the State committee.

   Our organization and A. S. C. representatives cooperate in educational programs of mutual interest at both the county and state level. I feel that this is as it should be. We would not want to become involved in program administration. Our relationship with the A. S. C. Committees at both the state and county level is very fine."

2. "We appreciate your contacting us relative to the study of the ASC Committee System.

   In general, I believe the ASCS farmer committee system is very desirable. Leaving decisions to committees well versed on local situations and needs seems to be a very good plan and means for administering farm programs. Perhaps one weakness in this system is the apparent need for many and detailed instructions and interpretations of the law under which the ASCS program is being administered, making it extremely difficult for county or state committees to be well versed and to have a real understanding of what they can do and what they should not do relative to the various programs.

   This, no doubt, has been deemed necessary due to the varied interpretations which might be placed upon a given law and the great variance in farming conditions in various sections of the country.

   If some means could be developed whereby county and state committees could have the basic provisions of the law and a broad interpretation which would be supported by auditors and if they then could be given the authority to administer the program in the best interests of their county and state situation, but in keeping with the broad provisions of the law, I believe the effectiveness of the county and state committees would be increased.

   Our experience has been that county and state committees are sincere in attempting to fulfill their responsibilities in administering the programs and that they do so to the very best of their ability."

3. "In principle, the involvement of local committees working under State ASC committees seems quite desirable. Through this organizational process, it is possible to bring into program administration the thinking and concern of farm people for whom the program is designed. Unfortunately, as is the case with municipal and county government, the caliber of men who serve on local committees varies greatly. In those instances where the committee members represent well informed conscientious farmers, the system seems to me to be excellent. Conversely, in those areas where local committees are represented by inept or unconcerned and uninformed individuals, program administration suffers accordingly. I frankly have no recommendation for correcting this particular problem since it is not one that is confined to the ASC farmer committee system but permeates all levels of governmental and inter-governmental operations.

   A serious problem in administration under the committee's structure now used is the providing of adequate and accurate information to county committeemen. It is my personal view that the articulation and approval of a long range national program for agriculture, with the stability in program implementation which could be developed therefrom, would materially improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the local committees. In the past,

there have been sufficient numbers of changes made so that committee members are often not fully informed either as to details of policy or as to the intended result in terms of national policy.

Overemphasis by a state ASC committee on political considerations can be detrimental to program vitality. Although the principle of political affiliation is acknowledged in the appointments of state ASC committeemen, it is unfortunate that those considerations have at times appeared to outweigh competence. A survey of politically neutral agencies and individuals might assist in selection of state committeemen of known competence and accepted reputations.

One further administrative consideration is offered. It seems to me that state committees are most effective if they assume a high degree of understanding and capability by county committees. Reversal of county committee decisions by the state committee should be done with care and reason. If reversals become routine there is indication of weakness in either the state or local committee."

4. "It has been my observation over the years since I first became acquainted with the committee system as an ASCS (at that time AAA) county office manager back in the late '30's that there was more interest in the election of the ASCS county committee in one-community counties where farmers voted directly on candidates to the county committee.

In multi-community counties, as you know, the county committee is selected by delegates from the community committees. Regardless of how good a job the delegates do, the farmers have not voted these county committeemen into office and, therefore, take less interest in the entire committee election procedures.

I do not believe there have been serious abuses in my state of the power placed in the hands of the delegates from the community committees. In the main, I think they have done an outstanding job. There is room for abuse, however, and also room for criticism which we have heard recently. I realize that any election procedure has its weak points. However, I believe that interest and participation by farmers in committee elections would be increased if procedures were developed whereby farmers could vote on both county and community committeemen in the same election. This would necessitate working out procedures for securing nominees to the county committee position prior to the election."

5. "It has been my privilege to observe the ASC committee system both from the county and state levels since its beginning. In my opinion, the system is completely sound and, in fact, is the most democratic way to administer this important program.

It has been my observation that in practically every case county committeemen take their job seriously and perform in a most commendable manner. At the state level as Director of the Agricultural Extension Service for more than eight years, it has been my pleasure to work closely with the State Committee of this system. Such firsthand observations have led me to the conclusion that this committee system is serving its purpose well and, in fact, I do not see any logical substitute for the system in effectively carrying out the ASCS Program."

6. "I have had an opportunity over a period of some time to see these committees in operation. They have always been a dedicated group of men with sympathy for the problems of farm people and what I have always considered to be good comprehension of public policies that may be established or may be related to these problems.

They, in general, feel their responsibility very keenly and it has been a real pleasure to have worked with them. There are times when it has seemed to me that the committeemen may have involved themselves more directly in administration or operational matters that could more effectively or efficiently be handled by personnel employed for that purpose. However, for the most part, I am sure the time and attention, and real interest on the part of the committeemen are in overall policy matters."

7. "As far as I have been able to determine, the committees function well and are dedicated to their work. The state leadership is very fine and sincerely attempting to do a top job. There are problems involved in almost any conceivable system of selecting a lay group to help administer such a program. Some of my impressions are as follows:

    1. People are frequently elected with a very small vote.

    2. There is some apparent difficulty in getting people to accept the assignment.

    3. There seems to be a tendency to administer the funds in a way that a maximum number of people can receive funds.

    4. The committees seem to interpret their job as being one of aggressively selling farm programs as well as the policies of the Department of Agriculture, rather than simply administering the programs."

8. "On the whole, it seems to me that the committee system has performed a very useful and purposeful function. I'm convinced that the township or community committeemen have aided materially in extending and bringing understanding of the Department of Agriculture's program to their immediate neighbors. My personal experience in extending the soil conservation practices as an Extension worker in 1940-42 made me intimately aware of this.

    One of the questions that seems to exist in the minds of some county committee members relates to their specific role or responsibility. They have asked whether they should be "policy-makers" exclusively or "administer" programs or a combination of both. This question is more pertinent when the county committee function is related to the office manager function. In my judgment, the questions of effectiveness can best be answered against a fairly clear definition of role. Perhaps this does exist. If so, the question may be asked if the functions are the same or different for county and township committees."

9. "One of the weaknesses of the present system, as we see it, is the large amount of material which the local committees must review. One of the strengths undoubtedly is the removal of a considerable amount of land from agricultural production."

10. "The State Committeemen must be outstanding farm leaders whose primary interest is agriculture. (May I add a commercial here and state that the committeemen have, in the past, been outstanding leaders, conscientious, and dedicated.)

    State Committee members should be rotated (four, eight or ten years) and not be required to serve continuously for a long period of time.

    The State Committee should consist of growers or farmers who represent the major crops and farm enterprises in the state.

When elected, committeemen should receive specific training, as to their role, duties and responsibilities.

State Committeemen should concentrate on developing understanding of operational policies of the ASCS. When it becomes obvious that they are spending too much time "selling" the USDA programs, criticism is usually forthcoming."

11. "The membership on the State Committee has included some of our most progressive farmers. They have made some sacrifices in their own business to serve on the committee. Members have regarded their function primarily as that of determining policy with responsibilities for operations being left with the executive officer. With this feeling among the board members, the executive officer has brought important policy matters to the board for their decision but not taken their time with trivial matters.

Our county committees are nominated and elected by the farmers. It seems to me that this plan is basic to the operation of our total ASC organization. Here again, county committee members are farm operators. They will give attention to areas of program development and execution but are not looking for opportunities to make work to get on the payroll. It would seem to me that our county committees have included a good cross section of our large farm operators as well as the small farm operators. Particularly important, as far as county committees are concerned, is the fact that they have the respect of the farmers who elect them, except as one may occasionally find an individual who is disappointing.

Some committees have informally worked out a system of rotation of membership on the county committees. This is good and I feel should be adopted in all counties. I believe our county committees have about the right amount of freedom to operate the program in their area within the framework of national agricultural policy.

In closing, I would strongly urge that the elective committee system be continued."

12. "I would say the feeling is that the county committee system seems to work reasonable well, though there are individuals who seem to try to make a full-time job out of it. Apparently it works best where there is a competent county manager who really functions as a manager and uses the county committee personnel as advisory consultants as necessary.

On the state committee I ran into less satisfactory reactions. There was a feeling that here appointments tended to be made on a political basis and the changes which took place after elections did not make for an effective administration of programs, particularly when changes were made on county manager in addition. I would say the feeling I got was that if competent persons, from the viewpoint of administrating the program, were hired and were kept on the job and if they functioned well, would result in better administration of the program than the system which has been in effect.

On the fieldmen, I have had relatively little contact. Again there I would feel that if they were selected on the basis of having ability and experience to fit them for the job it would be well to have them on civil service or its equivalent, - and that they be retained on the basis of doing a good job or dropped if they proved unsatisfactory.

As I read this again I feel that I have written this in a rather positive manner, - probably more so than my recent contacts justify, so you may want to apply a discount factor to my suggestions."

13. "Generally speaking I think it is doing a good job. Under any system one will have personnel which are not as competent and productive as you would like. Nevertheless, the nomination and election system of community committeemen and county committeemen is on a democratic basis and the opportunity is there for getting capable people who are interested in seeing a good job done. I believe that we have had our share of good community and county committeemen.

I have two suggestions to make in this regard. One is that perhaps there should be a limit on the number of years of service, and also it might be well to provide for more continuity. In regard to length of service, perhaps it would be well for the committee to be elected each year, but with the provision that one could not succeed himself for more than three years. As far as continuity is concerned, we have had a good carry over of people each year so that this has not been a problem. If it appeared to be a problem then it might be well to elect members for a two year term, on a staggered basis, and limit the number of terms they could serve.

My other comment in regard to committeemen is that perhaps one to be eligible for election should be a full time, bona fide farmer. Whenever one ceases to be a full time farmer then he would be ineligible for re-election.

Generally speaking, I am sympathetic to the committee system as compared to a straight line agency system. The judgment factor by a committee in carrying out the agricultural program is, I believe, sounder than if all of this authority resided in one person.

I recognize that there are some strengths and weaknesses in the ASC committee system, but I do not have any real suggestions to make to you other than the encouragement of obtaining top flight people to do the job. Perhaps here some better guidelines on qualifications and methods of carrying out the work would be useful."

14. "The fundamental question is, what do you want the image of the ASC to be? I personally doubt if there will be much difference in the effectiveness of ASC programs, regardless of the system used. Up to this point, the organization has operated by very carefully worded regulations. I grant that state and local committees have had considerable voice in the programs, but from the standpoint of administration, it has been simply a matter of reading the regulations and applying them. I think the committees have done a fairly good job of this.

If the decision is made to make the committees strictly advisory, then the decision should be made at the same time to create a career service with politics completely eliminated. I think much would be lost if the committees were eliminated and politics continued to be an important factor in the selection of ASC employees.

It is my personal opinion that it would be well to maintain the committee system and actually strengthen their authority. If they had more opportunity to make local decisions, I think the program would be more effective. I realize that there have been several scandals in connection with this program, but most of these have resulted from paid employees and not committeemen. Of course, this might be eliminated if the system consisted almost entirely of highly competent and well-paid professional people, fully protected by the Civil Service System.

I have not expressed my ideas too well. In summary, I would say either staff ASC with career employees, protected from political influence, or go further toward a committee system."

15. "I would say that the committee system has worked well. In a few cases, there has been a tendency, on the part of the committee, to want to do detailed office work rather than confine themselves to policy making and overall direction of the program. The office managerial system has certainly helped to alleviate this condition.

The recent recognition by USDA of county office employees will help to develop more confidence and stability among employees. Our folks feel that this is important to the continuity of the program as changes occur. There is a feeling that this will establish more security and improve morale among county office employees.

There are those who feel that the rapid turnover in state committees is detrimental to the program. My personal observations are that we have had some real outstanding people during the past ten years and even with the frequent turnover we continue to have high caliber personnel. The personnel within the office itself and at the state level show a much more effective job with stability through career people.

I think people, in general, like the system of electing farmer committeemen in their county structure. Basically, this gives them an opportunity to express themselves and to maintain administrative people who are constantly alert to their responsibility to local people in their community."

16. "I have served as a member of the State Committee since coming here in 1956 and have been impressed with the quality of the State Committeemen. It has been a real pleasure to work with them and I think that they have contributed a great deal to the program here in the State.

I have not had the time to work with the county committees but in toto I think that they have done a very good job in helping to administer the ASC work. I believe that the work in the counties would be very materially improved if you were able to increase salaries for the ASC worker. The entrance salary is hardly enough to live on and naturally we cannot attract the most qualified individual.

I think that the county committees have done a very good job and I certainly can re-emphasize the point in reference to the state committees."

17. "I want to thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the evaluation of the effectiveness of farm program administration through the ASC Committee System.

I am intimately acquainted with its activities and history. In general, I would say the Committee System has been fundamentally sound and effective in federal farm program administration and has brought an indispensible degree of democracy into the initiation, participation and administration of federal farm programs in this State. In my experience, the great majority of our State, County and Community Committeemen have given conscientious loyal, ethical and able leadership to the programs and program administration - even though they have not always agreed with all details of the programs or program administrative policy and procedure.

In our State, the line of communications between the State ASC Office (and its predecessors) and the County Offices has always been superb, and I believe the same can be said regarding communications between the State and Federal offices. The participation of our county agricultural agents as ex-officio members of the County ASC Committees and of the Director of Extension on the State Committee has been good - has helped keep all informed on various agency objectives and the several programs effectively coordinated. And again, generally speaking, the cooperation and coordination among and between the various federal and state

agricultural agencies in this State has been good to excellent over the years - with some minor episodes of agency jealousies and/or disagreements on program recommendations, policies, or practices. The system of elected representative program Committeemen and the general high calibre of the various program administrative heads who have served has contributed markedly to this desirable state of affairs.

There are a few constructive criticisms that have come to me repeatedly from the farmer Committeemen and participants over the years in this State which I will offer for the good of the cause as follows:

1. The State ASC Committee would be more effective, more objective, and better received by the rank and file of farmers if elected to office by the County Committee System or some other democratic process, rather than appointed by the Secretary, as in the past - completely divorced from partisan politics.

   There is a tendency, too, for the politics of the situation to filter down to the county level, which in turn creates similar barriers of acceptance with many there.

2. A good many times County ASC Committeemen have expressed the feeling that they have too often been used as "rubber stamps." There are good and able men serving on these committees and it is important to give them as much freedom of action and thinking as is compatible with sound administration and program objectives. Again, the democratic process should be fully encouraged to work to obtain creative, imaginative thinking and responsible, productive action. (I fully appreciate that in administering a nation-wide farm program, there must be a basic concept of action, policies and procedures, which all must accept and operate upon; and that it is very difficult to get all the people involved at the different levels to fully appreciate why certain specified policies, procedures and program details must be adhered to.)

3. It has come to my attention that there is some criticism of the fact that there is practically always an official representative of the State ASC Office in attendance at all County ASC Committee sessions, which tends to weaken the confidence of the County Office Managers and Committees in standing by their judgments, and sometimes annoys them. However, I would hasten to add that the State ASC Office personnel are highly and even affectionately regarded by the County ASC Committeemen and personnel. Again, I feel it is a case of a little more "free rein" and independence of judgment and action being good for the cause and conducive to more responsible and effective administration. Judgment, like muscles, must grow through use."

18. "Our experiences with the ASC Committee system have been very satisfactory. The first state committee, then operating under a different designation, was nominated by the then Extension Director. With one or two changes in the chairmanship, this committee remained intact longer than was the case in any of the states. The executive officer, likewise nominated by the Extension Director, remained in that capacity for many years. These committeemen were high-type respected leaders with previous community or county committee experience and were nominated without regard to political affiliation. In fact, it has been said that the Extension Director knew the political affiliation of only one of the group.

The plan of rotating this membership is, of course, by and large, to be preferred over such long-time service. In cases of superior service, committeemen of high standing should receive reappointment over a reasonable period regardless of political affiliation. One weakness is already apparent and that is the naming of committeemen because of their political affiliation. This tends to reduce the status and prestige, and, therefore, effectiveness of the committee in the public mind. Some people now tend to look upon it as a propaganda group rather than a completely objective one.

The county committee part of the administrative setup has also worked very well. We believe it essential that there be local influences in administration as contrasted to a bureaucratic procedure, and know of no better way to bring this about than the one which has been followed. In fact, it is the only method we know of whereby all farmers in the state will receive fair and equitable treatment. Notwithstanding reasonable success here, there seems to be evident a growing tendency to override local opinion that is based on intimate knowledge of the peculiarities of local situations in favor or nationalized overall procedures. There have been occasions when it seemed the sound opinion of a county committee and the state committee has not been solicited, or, if they were, their suggestions were disregarded."

19. "I have not heard any serious criticism of the farmer committee structure and function. The only criticism I have heard recently stemmed from a group of farmers and it had to do with political activities. This group felt that ASC committeemen have been engaged in political activity favorable to the administration in Washington and there was some question whether or not this is in violation of the Hatch Act. I just happened to be in the group when this discussion took place and did not comment one way or the other.

    It has been my observation in this state that the committeemen are generally high type respected citizens, and I have no suggestion for improving the administrative setup for the ASC activities."

20. "There is considerable strength and merit to the committee system for administering, particularly the regulatory aspects of the farm program. It provides for the needed flexibility to interpret and adjust regulations to meet a great variety of local situations. The committee system also involves farmers in the operation of a program designed to be of assistance to them. By this involvement they become acquainted with agricultural programs. There is, however, a basic weakness in expecting untrained part time farm committeemen to handle the many detailed routine operational functions required in administering a nationally directed farm program complete with traditional bureaucratic paper work, rules and regulations. All volunteer or part time committees functioning within the department, in my experience, should be limited to advice, consultation, policy guidance, the exercise of local judgment, program explanation to others and social support to those following their policy guidance.

    If these observations of committee operation are valid, the success of the farmer committee administration of agricultural programs will depend upon the professional services provided these committees. This means that without strong civil service professional staff management in county ASC offices, confusion and lack of uniformity in interpreting regulations as well as inefficient administration of farm programs results.

    In making these comments I recognize the ideal of farmers operating their own farm programs and would not like to see the farmer committee system weakened, but in my opinion, strengthening the administrative responsibilities of the office

manager would not weaken the committee but would strengthen their operation as advisory and policy guiding bodies. It would not be inconsistent with these committees to also charge local committees with the responsibility of employing or approving the employment of local personnel provided responsibilities of committee members and professional employees were clearly described."

21. "My impression is that county committees vary greatly from those that practically rubber stamp the activities of the office force to those that really administer the various programs.

Frequently the comment is heard that political lines should not be followed exclusively in the selection of state committeemen and that the committee should be bipartisan politically. Some of the farmers feel that the farm leadership should in some way have a voice in the selection of the State Committee members or that farmers should actually elect them.

There are also comments to the effect that the election of community committees and county committees is largely a formality. No one seems to have a solution to this problem, but some recommend regular community elections in preference to the mail ballot system.

There is also a feeling among some that the qualifications of county office managers in some counties might be upgraded in keeping with salaries now being paid. Another thought often expressed is that the county committeemen should be made more aware of the responsibility of their positions as administrators of county programs."

22. "It is my judgment that most committeemen I have observed are honest, dedicated and conscientious people. Almost without exception, it has been my observation that these committeemen were anxious to serve effectively and desirous of seeing that the program regulations were carried out in strict accordance with the law. The greatest weakness that I have observed has been a tendency to re-elect the members of a committee over a long period of years. I definitely believe that the committee system would be strengthened if a rotational plan could be devised which would result in having one new member elected to the committee at least every two years. It would be my further suggestion that provisions be made for giving definite training and instruction to newly elected committeemen soon after they are elected. This could perhaps be handled on a district basis by bringing together the newly elected committee in a residential situation for two or three days during which time they would be instructed in their responsibilities and informed of the kinds of information and assistance they might be expected to provide other farmers and the professional staff members of the ASCS who were serving as County Office Administrators, Farmer Fieldmen, etc. I do not believe that the Committeemen should be expected to master the complete details of the program but they should be knowledgeable about the basic policies and general instructions so as to be able to discuss the program and its intent intelligently with other farmers and to recognize violations if they occur.

As I indicated above, it is my belief that the committee system is a sound one and I hope very much that it will be continued with provisions made to strengthen the recognized weaknesses of the system."

23. "The system since its start has been very effective here. It has been principally involved with the agricultural conservation program and, of course, during the war years worked on the milk subsidy program and also has from time to time been involved with certain price support programs and more recently the feed grains program as they applied to our state.

I believe that the farmer committeemen system has provided an excellent way to get grass roots farmer thinking on these programs, and especially the Agricultural Conservation Program. Many leading farmers have served on committees at all levels and especially at the county and state level. Their judgment and thinking has always been well founded, and I believe good as far as these programs are concerned.

It seems to me that the ASC Committee is really a sound part of a three-horse hitch; that is, the Extension Service being responsible for the educational work, the Soil Conservation Districts and the SCS in the case of soil and water conservation being responsible for technical assistance, and the ASCS being responsible for and assisting with the cost-sharing programs to help farmers carry out effective programs.

Following are some suggestions that I would like to make after observing the ASC Committeemen system and working with it for the past 27 years. They are:

(1) We should always try to keep politics out of this system at all levels if a truly effective job of administration of programs is to be done.

(2) We should be sure to spell out quite definitely the areas of responsibility in the job descriptions of the committeemen at all levels, that is community, county, and state.

(3) In connection with the last item, every effort should be made to keep close cooperation with the educational agencies in the state and the department that have responsibilities for the educational jobs that must be done with farm people.

(4) I feel that from the Washington level there should be more selectivity with programs that are to be administered by the committee. I think there may be some tendency to ask these committeemen to be responsible for too wide a spectrum of programs which sometimes leads to lack of proper understanding and explanation of these programs, especially at the community and sometimes at the county committee level. This is not an indictment of the committeemen system, rather I would say that perhaps they are being asked to handle too many programs.

(5) We should have a definite rotational system for the selection of state committee members with county committeemen suggesting candidates for membership to the Secretary of Agriculture for his consideration in making the appointments.

(6) The Washington level should at all times provide flexibility in programs so that the state committee and county committeemen may have an opportunity to reflect changes that they feel would make the programs fit their particular areas effectively."

24. "In general, I feel that the committee system is very good and functions effectively in most cases. The county committeemen, in general, are very conscientious in carrying out programs and in getting the most effective conservation for the money spent.

Perhaps one of the shortcomings is that of not having enough interest in serving on county committees and ofttimes those who are willing to serve are not the best qualified.

I feel that auditors who check county records could spend more time in helping to instruct county office employees in addition to that of merely finding mistakes.

Our state committee has the policy of leaving more and more decisions to the county committee, especially where they know details better than the state committee members.

In general, I feel that the ASC committee system is working very well."

25. "I sought information from several sources and the following conclusions are those which were presented to me:

    1. Farmers generally take very little interest in election of community and county committees. A few farmers elect committees.

    2. In order for farmers to understand and administer present programs effectively would require a great deal more training for the committee members than they are now receiving.

    3. Committeemen, for the most part, approve the decisions made by the office managers and field men from the State Office.

    4. It is hard for the average farmer to understand the complexities of many programs which they are supposed to guide and direct. Usually they emphasize those practices and programs which they are most familiar with.

    5. More of the farmer committee's time should be used in developing programs and less as enforcers of regulations.

    6. Most of the committeemen in West Virginia are relatively old farmers. The per diem is attractive to them and they become interested in holding on to the job. We need more good young progressive farmers as committeemen.

    7. More and more political implications seem to be creeping into the program."

26. "From our observation there are several problems which cause lack of interest and participation at a leadership level in the ASC program. Briefly these are:

    1. Lack of provision for rotation of committee members in the past has led to long tenure with a consequence that people know pretty well before the election how it would turn out. This does not stimulate interest in elections.

    2. Rates of remuneration have not been adequate to encourage good leaders to give the necessary time to committee work. Too often the most capable leaders have avoided participation in conduct of the program to keep from being elected or selected. We recognize that increased renumeration could attract less capable people.

    3. Stronger leadership will usually be attracted to positions which offer responsibility and which carry prestige. It is possible that overall improvement would be obtained by placing more local responsibility on county and community committees. It appears particularly that provisions for more local programming by local committees would offer advantages."

27. "I think the committee system is good, but it seems to me that it needs some strengthening. Some of my ideas are as follows:

    1. County community committeemen need some concentrated in-service training on program objectives, policies, and broad administrative responsibilities. If this were done, then county community committeemen could be given a little more leeway in making administrative policy decisions to adapt programs to particular areas. Community committeemen have a very small role to play now. If they were properly trained, they should be in a position to help make more decisions relating to programs which fit local areas.

    2. Salary levels for office managers should be high enough that a well trained person could be employed to do the job. It seems to me that this is a notable

weakness because administrative detail should be the office manager's responsibility and not that of the county committee. Too many county committeemen try to get into the details of program operation and this should be the office manager's job.

I think the same general situation exists with regard to the State Committee. It seems to me that the State Committee becomes involved in many details which should be left to the Administrative Officer and his staff.

3. A system of rotation for county committeemen should be developed so that one man doesn't serve a lifetime on the committee. There is always a tendency to develop vested interests in facets or programs and in certain clientele. I would suggest a system of election to provide six year terms, one person elected each two years, with the chairman automatically the man with the longest tenure in office. This would provide some new blood in the committee and yet maintain some people with experience.

I am sure some of these things that I have mentioned are meant to happen under the present system."

28. "Over the many years that I have had close personal knowledge of these Committees and their operations, it has been my observation that the men elected have been representative of the better and more informed farmers in the State, and that they have applied themselves to their duties as Committeemen as conscientiously as they carry out their personal affairs.

So far as constructive suggestions are concerned, I think it might be well to consider a rotation policy for county committeemen, with each member serving for a 3-year term. Election procedures appear to be satisfactory, and would not require revision, except of course that to start the rotation system members would be elected for 1, 2, and 3 year terms, and then annually 1 member would be elected to serve for 3 years. I also suggest that community committeemen might well be elected for a 2-year term, rather than annually as at present.

My reason for these suggestions is that a committeeman cannot be expected to become versed in the policies and procedures which lie behind the programs administered by ASCS in one year. It is not possible to give a committeeman sufficient training in one year's service to acquaint him with the operations of the agency to the extent desirable. The community committeemen serve for very few days each year, and a 2-year term would give them an opportunity to become better informed and therefore more useful in their positions.

The county office managers do make much use of their county committees, calling upon them for advice and relying on their judgment and knowledge of local and individual situations in administering programs. I believe the present arrangement, whereby the county committee is a policy-making group, with broad responsibilities for overall management of programs in the counties, and with a county office manager who is immediately responsible for supervision of the county office and for handling the many detailed day-to-day functions of the programs, is very satisfactory.

I feel we have excellent working relationships among all agencies serving agriculture and I hope that any changes made in the ASCS organization will consider this factor so that we can work together to effectively serve the farmer and the public."

29. "We unanimously feel that the community committee system now used very effectively insures some reasonably well informed individuals in each community. It has been our observation that a community committeeman elected by his community quite generally accepts the responsibility of special attention to the program and

makes some special effort to become reasonably well informed. This is a commendable characteristic of committeemen.

We would like to suggest some changes in the present selection of community and county committeemen. It has been our observation that there is a need to change the election procedures to provide for a better opportunity for larger numbers of people to participate in elections. It is not unusual for only a very few members of a community to conduct the election. It has been frequently necessary to actually go out and pick up individuals in order to have enough present to actually conduct an election. Perhaps greater participation could be obtained if the community election was incorporated as a part of a primary or general election so that greater numbers of people would automatically come to the polls. We believe this is a serious shortcoming of the committee system.

We would like to suggest consideration of the requirement that county committee members rotate on about a six or eight year basis. We believe the rotation of membership on the county committee would automatically result in an improved interest in the election of committeemen.

Our county extension agents are ex-officio members of the county committee. In many counties this arrangement works quite satisfactorily. However, in a considerable number of counties he is not involved either through actions of his own or through actions of the county committee to the extent where he has a good acquaintanceship with the actions taken by the county committee.

We would encourage any action that would cause the county committee to more actively involve the county extension agent or actions that would cause the county extension agent to more effectively assume a responsibility for his ex-officio membership on the county committee."

30. "We concur fully with one of the principal objectives of the committee system which is to provide an opportunity for grass roots participation at the local levels. We think that is highly important in connection with the administration of any program.

We do feel that there are a number of points that your group may need to consider quite carefully as you evaluate this committee system. These points are as follows:

1. All too often it has been difficult to generate any great participation of farmers in voting for committeemen. Consequently the selection of committee members has generally not been any manifestation of interest in participation of those who are supposed to select them: namely, the farmers.

2. Committee members selected for their important work have generally been unfamiliar with administrative procedures. Consequently, there has been a very definite weakness in the administration of the program by the committee system.

3. It has often been our thought, as well as observation, that the operation of programs has been improved through the use of well qualified appointed administrative officers who understand procedures and the duties of their office much better than elected committeemen unfamiliar with operational procedures and with the details of the program they are supposed to administer.

4. The present arrangement, at least in this state, seems to work very well of having the program administered by a very competent career man, skilled in administrative procedures and thoroughly versed in the details of the program, who has the advice of competent committee members appointed from among a list of qualified persons recommended because of their breadth of understanding and ability to make wise decisions.

We believe that the real merit of committeemen could be to serve in an advisory capacity. There could well be a combination of elected and appointed committeemen as is true in the case of SCS Supervisors. Their terms could be staggered to provide for continuity in office. Such a group is in a position to give sound grass roots advice to administrative officials appointed on the basis of merit, skill, training and knowledge of the details of the program and of administrative procedures."

31. "1. I would suggest that the State Committee be composed of three members.

2. That these members be bonafide farmers. In addition to this, I suggest they be farmers that are representative of the various areas of the state and aware of the rapid technical changes that are being made in present day agriculture

3. That the terms of these three members be on a staggered basis.

4. That the members be appointed on a non-partisan basis.

5. That the members not be representatives of specific organizations or special interest groups.

6. That the committee not be used as a lobbying group for any legislative purposes.

7. That the members of this committee act as an administrative group to set policies under which the appointed employees of the department should operate. This would mean that these men should have some administrative experience or background.

The above suggestions have references primarily to the State ASC Committee but most of the items could also apply to county and community committeemen."

32. "The community, county, and state committees have been the backbone, so to speak, of agricultural conservation and adjustment programs. It is rather difficult to make constructive suggestions as to how this important aspect of the program might be strengthened and made more effective. It has been my observation that county committeemen were, on the whole, conscientious, dedicated individuals who accepted their responsibility with a sincere desire to render a public service. The vast majority of the members are leading farmers with substantial operations and extremely busy in managing their own affairs. The time devoted to ASCS programs represents a definite sacrifice in that their own operations may be neglected.

I took the liberty of raising the question with a former county and state commiteeman whose judgment and objective thinking I regard quite highly. Some of his comments are quoted as follows:

"It is difficult to know just what to say about this. As a committeeman, it always seemed to me that I did not know enough about the programs and their administration to make intelligent decisions on many matters where a decision by the committee was expected. In other words, full consideration of all aspects was impractical due to time limitations of the committeemen and to the lack of specific knowledge. Further, and this was obviously due to the nature of national programs, crucial decisions already had been made either by legislation or by administrative action. Many hours were spent in reaching trivial decisions. It sometimes seemed that a chief function was to make programs more palatable to those affected. Committees give some local legitimation to national programs and support them.

"Too much may have been expected of the committee system. Administration belongs in the hands of professionals. Committees could be more effective by giving general guidance to

administrators rather than attempting to do the administering. As it is, they really do neither quite adequately. They administer (sometimes in name only) and delegate to others the real task of operation of programs. They do lend the weight of their names to administration and program support, which has some value."

One is prone to wonder if county committees have fully understood their responsibilities in connection with the conduct of the program. It would seem that the most useful area might be in supplying policy guidance and giving general direction to the local program. There are indications that committees have occasionally delved rather deeply into operations and have tended, as one man expressed it, "to do too much looking over the county office manager's shoulder."

The county office manager is a professional career employee who is held responsible by the state office for the operation of the program. One might question the wisdom of designating the county committee as the employing officer with authority to discharge the county office manager at its discretion. While this arrangement has certain strengths, it also has some obvious weaknesses. It is quite possible that the local manager may take some courses of action contrary to his better judgment because of the necessity of remaining in the good graces of the county committee. While a cooperative relationship is desirable, it would seem that some adjustments in the present methods of employment and tenure might well be given consideration.

The committee system has much in its favor. It provides an opportunity for local people to express their wishes and desires to their duly elected representatives who are close to the problem. Perhaps a more careful delineation of the legitimate areas with which the committee should be concerned would be desirable.

It is gratifying to know that a careful objective appraisal is being made of the committee system, and I am sure that steps can be taken which will make it much more effective in promoting the welfare of agriculture."

33. "The committee system is working well throughout the state. The committeemen are well acquainted with the conservation programs and the conservation needs in their respective areas. This knowledge makes it possible for them to assist with the development of practical conservation programs on a county and state basis. They can go direct to the individual farmer if necessary to acquaint him with the program or program changes. The committee system furnishes a known channel through which A. S. C. S. program information and policies can be transmitted to the farmer. It gives the farmer a channel through which he can make his conservation needs known. The community, county and state committees work in close cooperation to carry out the assigned functions and policies of the A. S. C. S.

    Thought has been given to the idea that the community committeemen should be elected for a term longer than one year. This would make it possible for the committeemen to become even more acquainted with the programs and be in a better position to perform the functions assigned to them."

34. "The farmer committee system has the virtue and advantage of placing some of the responsibility for the proper administration of farm programs directly upon the farmers themselves. This system gives all farmers an opportunity to have a say as to those who will help in administration of farm programs. There are many who believe the farmer committee system is the backbone of the farm programs being administered by ASCS. They believe that the job could not be done as well without these farmer committees who not only bring the practical touch to program administration but who serve as a tempering influence against excessive bureaucracy in administration.

There is one suggestion offered as a means of possible improvement of the effectiveness of county and community committees. However, this suggestion would necessitate, I think, a change in legislation. The suggestion is that county and community committees be elected in such manner that only one member will leave the committee each year, thereby leaving two members, with the new member, as a means of stabilizing the committee and providing for greater continuity of direction and emphasis.

The farmer committee system has been referred to many times as the "grass roots administration" and as "democracy in action." I think the farmer committee system is substantially a case of seeking the council and advice of those who are best acquainted on a first-hand basis with the problems, and of using the help of those who from experience have the best "know-how" to solve these problems."

35. "I should like to make the following comments and recommendations:

    1. Keep farm programs simple. In my judgment farm programs over the years have been all together too detailed and involved for farmers to understand properly. Even committeemen have difficulty understanding correctly and becoming well informed. Where we have such complexity and detail violations can be aware that violations have been made. It is my honest opinion that where violations have occurred in a high percentage of the cases, the violations have not been malicious, but have been due to a lack of understanding, misunderstanding or even confusion about what the rules, regulations, specifications, etc., actually mean.

    2. Limit the number of meetings per month that county committeemen and state committeemen can schedule and be paid for. In my judgment some committeemen and committees want to make a job out of committee work.

D. Excerpts from Letters from Leading Soil Conservation Officials

1. "Most of the Community Committeemen do not spend much time and thought on what the program should do for them. The whole program comes too much from Washington and not enough from the farmer.

    "Let me qualify myself on this statement. I have been a Community Committeeman, and in all the meetings which I attended, the emphasis was on being told what and how, never much chance to offer ideas of our own. Later, as a Soil Conservation District Supervisor, I sat in on the planning of the next year's handbook. This was some better but we were still limited by the State and National handbook.

    "I sat in on the State level. Here again we had too many Agency people and too few actual farmers writing the program. Many times I was the only man in the room whose sole source of income was from my own farm operation. Too often, as these people make their reports, there seems to be mutual agreement between them to let each have what it wants as long as each agency stays in its own field.

    "The system of ASC Committeemen should be farmer elected from the community all the way to the top. They must all be actual farmers who have no other source of income, so they know that by their acts, they and other farmers will live or die. Too many people on the top level are professionals, and anyone away from the farm for even a few years is way out of date and out of step with the problems that now confront us.

    "I do not believe that any system will do the job until we become hard-headed about the whole matter. We can't go on cutting down on present producers and letting someone else in, even on a single non-allotment acre exemption. Those small

acres in aggregate, add up to more than we need in many cases. If I now had the same corn and wheat allotment that started on this farm, I would have a good program. However, much of my original allotment has been passed out to new producers on acres that formerly were not growing these crops at all. This is also true of cotton and some other crops.

"Basically, the whole problem has been trying to help that farmer exist who does not have an economic unit. It is impossible, other than a dole system, to help these people without making it extra good for those who have the ability to gather together a unit that is economically feasible.

"In some way, we as farmers must get across to the rest of the nation that they are paying less of their income for food than any other nation, and eating better than any other people. Many of the things charged against Farm Programs are actually subsidies to the consumer. Grain storage is for the benefit of all people, and should not be charged against the farm after it leaves the farm. This is only one of many such things: "Food for Peace', 'School lunch', 'Watershed Protection', etc.

"Our most important industry must be put into a different light in front of the public. About four out of ten jobs in private employment are directly related to agriculture, so let's keep it up and going. Precentage-wise, our farm products are not government subsidized as high as in many countries of the world, but how many Americans know this."

2. "As a director of our Soil Conservation District I can report that cooperation has been excellent with apparent good working relationships both ways. The few problems which do occur are usually a result of misunderstandings or differences in personalities at local levels. Best of all I have no complaints."

3. "I feel that the average farmer does not take enough interest in the selection of county committeemen to bring about a sufficient change and turnover in committee personnel, which tends to perpetuate existing county committees.

"The reason for the lack of interest on the part of the farmer, is the meager funds available to the county committee. In a great many instances the funds for one year's programs are being borrowed from the succeeding year's appropriation. Also there is hardly ever more than 50% assistance given.

"A great many of our farmers have lost interest entirely in getting any assistance whatsoever. Since in our area, we have no crops that are under marketing orders, of which ASC handles, I am not familiar with this phase of their duties."

4. "As an impersonal farmer participant the following observations disturbed me to the point of wanting to become a county committeeman in the hopes of changing what I considered inequities and poor public relations between the farmer and the local ASC office:

   1) The psychology created in the farmer's mind was that the ASC office existed purely as a 'give-away' program to help them meet their cost of production.

   2) The farmer's image of the ASC office was that of a political dictatorship.

   3) The relationship between other agricultural agencies and the ASC office had reached a low point.

   4) The low regard that farmers had for the ASC office led to very small voter participation in committee elections. Consequently, members in office year after year.

"As the vice-chairman of the county ASC committee for one year the following observations were made:

1) The elected committee was only expected to rubber-stamp everything proposed by the office manager, the area supervisor and the state office.

2) It was evident that the state committee had little authority and the state administrator dictated all policies and decisions.

3) One particular case involving a possible soil bank contract violation hinged entirely on the word 'intent'. No decision, to my knowledge, was ever reached in spite of lengthy correspondence between our committee and the state office. We were never able to get wheat we considered adequate, legal advice on the interpretation of the work 'intent'. It is my contention that such ambiguous words as 'intent' used in rules, regulations and contracts leave the committee system and the Department of Agriculture wide open for graft, fraud and adverse criticism.

4) The administrative cost of approximately $20,000.00 to put $60,000.00 in the field through ACP payments in our county seemed out of proportion. The justification for this administrative cost was explained as being prorated among all other ASC program costs. However, as stated before, ASC programs other than ACP were limited in this county. The presentation of the administrative budget to the committee was never more than a formality.

5) In spite of the fact that the committee was theoretically supposed to approve all ACP cost sharing applications, there were always pointed directions from the office manager and area supervisor as to how they wanted us to allocate the funds. It was our committee purpose to allocate the funds for permanent soil and water conservation practices. It was apparent that ASC personnel desired to allocate a little to everyone, disregarding the true purpose of ACP.

6) In association with other county ASC committees, it seemed obvious that very few were well informed or aware of the importance of their elected duties. They were more impressed with their twenty year pins than with the administration of a vital program.

7) As county committeemen meeting regularly once or twice a month it was obvious that we could not begin to understand or comprehend all of the rules and regulations, therefore we had to rely to a great extent upon the guidance and advice of the office manager.

"The greatest strength of the committee system lies in the fact that it is composed of ASC participating farmers who, at least, are well aware of the farm problems and needs of their community and can project the thoughts and feelings of their neighbors.

"In reviewing my motivations and observations as a committee member, I believe that it is evident that the criticism and faults are not due to the committee system but rather to the philosophy and procedure as administered by ASC personnel on the county, state and national level. No policy or procedure is any better than the people that make them. We must definitely recognize that policies and procedures are initiated, formulated and administered by elected or appointed officials in Washington."

5. "As we think of the committee type system of administering farm programs, I feel there needs to be a consolidating of means to achieve the end. For instance I find that the ACP program that is recommended by the state ASC committee varies from

what is carried out on the local county level. We in Soil Conservation District work have getting basic conservation practices applied on the land to the greatest possible extent as our goal, but funds are not available oftentimes through ACP for these basic practices.

"In my opinion, by extending the 'Great Plains Program', we would have a more coordinated effort to obtain conservation practices on the land than under the present ACP system. I also find that some local committeemen are more interested in dividing funds into small amounts resembling relief checks to numerous farmers rather than in getting conservation applied to the land. In our area ASC committees are thought of by many farmers as a crop production control committee and this connotation in itself makes this committee relatively uneffective for administering funds for conservation practices. In many districts the transfer of funds from ACP to the Soil Conservation Service for services rendered has not brought about the best working relationships."

6. "As a supervisor I have participated in numerous efforts to bring about closer working relationship with the ASC people. We have met with them at least annually to review the county's needs and have always had a pleasant relationship with both the committee and its staff members.

"I have rather strong feelings concerning the democratic approach to government in our society and am familiar with some of the problems this entails. This is a transition area where the farmers feel that 'farming is gone' in this county. Farmers are so often unfortunate in their leadership and particularly so in this county as the president of the Farm Bureau (current) for example, quit his 'government job' several years ago and went into the real estate business. This has tended to cut off the supply of young farmers with hopes for the future and results in the leadership becoming hopeless ingrown. I think this is one of the difficulties we face both with governmental activities and farmers in general.

"We have never been able to persuade any of our ASC committeemen to attend any of our many soil conservation activities except our annual dinners. The reason supposedly, is that they attend only those functions for which they are paid to attend. Let me say I do not wish to be unfair because farmers are busy people and their time is money to them. I wish rather to indicate some of the problems of trying to work together and to get the increasing amount of work done. This is a bigger and bigger problem.

"I think the committee system is basically sound but I would hope that some way could be found to limit service of any individual to require, at least, interruption of that service for a period---perhaps that is required already---I am not sure, and to set up some requirements or qualifications to raise the standards a bit, particularly from an educational point of view. I feel we must rotate leadership and encourage the younger farmer. Otherwise we stagnate. This isn't easy and has some built in problems of its own but somehow we must realize our society does not move forward and we must learn to understand its problems and be willing to accept change.

"To the incredibility difficult problems of our agricultural economy we now add the complex problems of land use. This is enough to throw any citizen let alone a tired farmer. I farmed here in this county for 23 years and I passed my sixtieth birthday last April. I tell you this so you will understand some of my concerns above.

"We simply have to have better qualified and more capable people to cope with our increasingly difficult problems. Maybe something could be done to add to the prestige of the job or some way to help the local people keep up a better public relations program going. I have noticed repeatedly that where you find a happy and successful

situation, whether it be ACP, soil conservation or what not, you will always find a good man behind it. Let's have more good men!"

7. "I have great faith in the present system of the ASC committee structure. It is based on a truly democratic system on a county basis. As for the appointed committee, certainly they need to feel their proposed programs are necessary therefore they must need to be appointed from ranks of supporters. My only fear regarding the appointment system beyond the county level is that men are sometimes appointed who do not know a great deal about the program but have been staunch party supporters and this becomes their reward. For example, I know a fieldman who administrates to county committees who does not have even one single conservation practice on his very rolling farm. Truly he does not realize the full content of the ACP program. I am sure that if these men are screened a little more closely as to actual qualifications they can still be selected from the ranks of supporters to an administration they heartily believe in."

8. "I do not believe there is too much wrong with the present Committee System, but more so with the type of program they are asked to administer.

   "These programs have been, and are, administered by the local ASC committees elected by the farmers on the Township basis. Although they are elected by the farmers, records will show and, I believe, conclusively prove that a very small percentage of farmers eligible to vote are actually electing these committeemen, so you have a situation where 2, 3 or 5% of the farmers are electing those they wish to represent them. My first suggestion would be to consider having the committeemen elected at the regular Township elections.

   "On the county level, you also have an elective committee, but from then on, you have appointments made by the Secretary of Agriculture. These appointments understandably run along political lines which, of course, brings some politics into the program, and it has been evidenced that appointments are made not so much according to ability, but more so according to party loyalty. This brings the program into a focus where the opposing party will find faults regardless of how well it is being developed and administered, and I believe we currently have a situation like this.

   "It is my contention that the emphasis has been more on selling payments to the farmer than conservation, and I personally feel we have too many soil miners and not enough soil minders. As I stated before, I do not believe the Committee System needs too many changes, but I would like for your Committee to give serious consideration to a program call 'The Great Plains Program'. You can get detailed information from the Soil Conservation Service as to how this program is operating, but I believe you will find it to be a program that actually sells conservation, although you may feel that this is outside the jurisdiction of your Committee."

9. "I feel that more de-centralization of authority in carrying out the program is desirable. In other words, I think the local boards should have more authority to make decisions in carrying out programs, which of necessity should be governed broadly and generally, in intent and principle, by the Secretary of Agriculture of the United States. It does not seem proper for a local board, which is elected and chosen by the farmers of a community, to have to go to the State head, and sometimes to Washington, for a final decision from which no deviation can be made regardless of circumstances. If local boards who know the situations and circumstances have no authority and power to fit the general program of the nation to their locality they are of very little or no value. We do not need 'rubber stamps' to carry out any program.

   "Combined meetings of all boards interested in carrying out the programs of the Department of Agriculture could well be held periodically, possibly every two or

three months. In such meetings coordination of work could be achieved and major decisions on local matters made."

10. "We definitely believe that the strength of our farm program has been because of the ASC Committeemen who have given their time and theirselves. Personally, I don't know how it could be improved, except perhaps if the Committees could be given a little more latitude, like they used to have, as regulations do not always fit a given area."

11. "I believe that the ASCS committeemen should be given more lee-way in the handling of funds allocated to their county, using their own judgment."

12. "If their job is to sell the farm program for whatever administration happens to be in power, the farmer committee is most effective. During the years I served as a township committeeman, back in the forties, I saw the wide use of this committee to sell the current farm program. In the fifties this use of the committee was almost totally abandoned. They are an excellent tool to carry the story back to the farms.

    "If, however, their main purpose for existing is to do the field work such as measuring and recording crop acreages, then I feel the job might be better done in a different way. It seems each year new regulations and methods are introduced which makes it increasingly difficult for the average farmer to understand without much supervision. This is of course costly and I believe could be better done by paid personnel who do not change with each year's election. Another argument in favor of this method is that, in our county at least, it is becoming harder and harder to get good men on these committees. Larger farms do not leave the better farmers time to work at the time these committees are supposed to be doing field work. A much simplified method of measuring would be a big help. Such a method as was used a few years ago was more simple and certainly as accurate.

    "Now a word about the county committee. Here is some room for improvement. First in method of election. Each member of the committee must stand for election in each year. Anyone who has served on the county committee knows it is impossible to learn all he should know, to do an effective job, in a year's time. These men should be elected to three year terms with one to be elected each year. The chairmanship could be decided by the committee itself. There is no reason to have alternates elected. Any vacancy on the committee could be filled by appointment till the next election.

    "During the past administration the work of the county committee became very limited with most of their former duties taken over by an office manager. Accordingly the job of office manager was upgraded. I believe under the present Administration this has been somewhat reversed with the result we still have the high salaried managers with the committee now again assuming many of his administrative duties. I believe this should be remedied. It is too costly to have two sets of bosses.

    "In conclusion I would say I believe the county committee is a very effective committee and I believe their ideas about the program should be more thoroughly explored. They are close to the farmers and understand their desires and dislikes."

13. "As to the administration of the program. First I will state what seems to be the greatest weakness now existing the ASC committees. That of getting the outstanding eligible persons at various levels to even consider devoting any time on the committees. Thus, in many cases they are staffed by what are considered comparatively weak or retired persons with little turnover in personnel. Secondly, consider the weakness of what seems to be an office manager system operating by directives which is now in operation: (a) Lack of interest in the problem from a personal point of view with a resulting situation that the farmer-participants problem cannot be

understood. (b) Poor public relations--the office manager making only those few contacts which the office personnel cannot service. (c) The greatest weakness is the possibility of error in judgment in a situation where the office manager has to rely only on the information available in their record files.

"Getting to the question of strengthening the effectiveness of the administration of farm programs. (1) I feel considerable help can be derived by giving the ASC committees the responsibility of seeing that the programs are properly administered. If this responsibility be given to the committees, land owners and farm operators in their respective areas will see that the best possible men available will be elected. This in itself will develop greater interest in the program. (2) When decisions are to be made by three committeemen, the possibility of errors in judgment are reduced. (3) The possibility of fraud or graft are practically eliminated because there are few situations in a given area which at least one committeeman would not be familiar. Also there is the automatic check which the committeemen have on each other. (4) Another strength of an active ASC committee system is the possibility of a greater public relations program. I feel my remarks are unbiased as I have no connection with any ASC committee, nor am I indebted to any person or organization for any past favors. I am reporting as I see the situation."

14. "I have no recommendations and feel that the ASC program is run very well in our county. I would like to see more farmers, however, use the ASC funds available in applying conservation practices on the farm."

15. "I think no system can be better than the people who administer it. In theory, our local community committeemen carry to the county committee the views of the local farmers. These views are carried by county committees to the State Committees. If this procedure is carried out and the State Committees are heeded nationally, we have truly a 'grass roots' representation.

"In practice, many farmers are too busy to talk with their community committeemen. Sometimes the community committeemen fail to get the message to their county committee. County committees rely on an 'office manager' to such an extent that the office manager often seems to be running the committee.

"For some time now there has been a growing conviction among farmers of my acquaintance that the ASC system is being used nationally for political purposes.

"We have made some changes in personnel of our local and county committees within the past year, and the local farmers are trying to stamp out graft and cheating."

16. "In our community there seems to be a let-up in interest in serving and because of this, the farmers are not too well informed and believe that all the rules are laid out at the State level and that they in turn get the rules and procedure from Washington, D. C.

"I believe that we all abuse the principles that the ASC are set up for. I think that most farmers should do the things that they receive payments for on their own. If these payments were made one year and then the farmer would not be eligible to receive any more payments, for say two or three years, I believe the farmers would continue to make improvements on their own.

"Too many farmers look on these payments as a yearly occurrence. I will not be a hypocrite, I too take advantage of these payments for soil conservation work but it is ladled out on first come first served. I believe consideration should be given to the ones who deserve it the most.

"So we come back to the first point I mentioned, the lack of interest in the local committee. Here we must have more interest shown and more local problems passed on by the committee. I believe we are set too much on a state level and not on the local level. It is my firm belief that it should be kept a grass root program and not a give away program.

17. "May I take this opportunity to express to you and the members of your Study Committee appreciation for the time which you are each devoting to this most important cause. I am sure each of you could find other ways to occupy your busy moments.

18. "The one most important criticism of the ASC committee system that I can offer is that it is obsolete. It was built upon perfectly valid assumptions as to the social and economic structure of agriculture before World War II, but it has continued to operate on these assumptions as though no changes had taken place in agriculture since that time. Whereas it was once necessary or at least desirable to have local ASC committeemen call on farmers to 'sell' them the program, it now happens frequently that the farmer is more sophisticated and better informed as to the ins and outs of the ACP program than the agent visiting him. Thus, it is my suggestion that the local community committeemen be eliminated entirely and the job be left to carefully selected county committees.

    "I believe county committees should be appointed, possibly from nominations submitted by local farm organizations, rather than elected so that they may have other qualifications than merely the willingness to run, which all too often means holding the job into perpetuity. Also terms of office should be limited to reduce the effect of outside influence which tends to be cumulative."

19. "It is my opinion that more and more of the functions of the locally elected ASC committees have been usurped and/or delegated to paid and professional help. To me it would seem logical that if grass roots thinking is to be implemented into the ASC program, that locally elected ASC committees should be employed on more of a permanent basis in order that they will have a fuller understanding of all operations of their local office for which they are responsible.

    It also seems to me that the State ASC committees are tied too closely with national politics and are too subject to change of whims of national administrations. Rather than have the State ASC committees appointed as a political patronage, it would seem desirable that offices of this stature should also be elected in some prescribed manner so that the grass roots thinking of the farmers could be expressed through their state committees.

    "In addition, it is my opinion that more and more unrelated activity is constantly being assigned to local and state committees. This makes it increasingly difficult for the committees to adequately verse themselves on the many different programs, procedures, policy directives and memos they are expected to understand and direct.

    "A good example of this is the ACP program. It would be my thought that the program of conservation and stabilization should be separated. To me this would overcome the present stigma being given to conservation by being attached to some price support or stabilization program. Not only city people but many farmers and ranchers do not fully understand the difference between conservation payments for ACP and subsidies through the price support program. In my estimation this will never be overcome until the responsibilities of these two programs are assigned to separate agencies. I say this as a firm backer in both the stabilization and conservation programs, but I feel that undue damage and poor public relations are accruing through the conservation program because of this tie.

This recommendation which I am making should not in any way reflect upon the administration or technical ability of any local or state ASC committee, but is only prompted by my interest in seeing that both of these programs be properly administered so that agriculture may be seen in a better light by all of our citizens in this great nation.

"Thank you for affording me the opportunity of expressing my opinion on this important subject. I want to wish your committee success in your deliberations."

20. "I have the greatest admiration and respect for the greatest number of individuals serving on these committees. I found a very few who were narrow and selfish in their viewpoint but this generally arose from their feeling that they were selected to make programs work to the advancement of agriculture in their local area of responsibility.

Local committeemen have lost much of the enthusiasm which characterized them in the 30s and 40s due, in my opinion, to several factors. 1. A press unfriendly to control and support programs so influenced public opinion that committeemen constantly experienced jibes and ridicule. 2. A constantly growing Bureaucracy with too many uninformed people writing and revising procedures so that it was more than a full time job to keep current with policy and operating procedures. 3. Placement of increased authority in the hands of career office managers at the County level has downgraded the status of County Committees.

In my opinion, no agricultural program can succeed and still maintain our democratic system unless there is strong support with complete understanding at the grass-roots. In the early years of the AAA and following the enactment of the 1938 Act producers had a good understanding of the need for a national farm program that would bring to farmers a parity of income. They generally understood the intent of control programs and while they may have grumbled, voluntary compliance was fairly good and when quotas were in effect County Committees made a conscientious effort to enforce equitable regulations.

With the passage of time and changing conditions the basic objectives of Agricultural policy have become confused and today little is being done to inform producers as to the direction we are going or the vehicle we are to use.

I have faith in the integrity of the American farmer and in the committee system. I consider the Department to be overstaffed with 9 to 5 people who are working only for retirement benefits; weeding out some of these could help to make the committee system more effective."

21. "First of all the committees must have the power and prestige to act on what they think is right within the law. I know that all too often the County Office-Manager is inclined to run the committee meetings, by telling the Committee, who are necessarily less well informed, that things must be done this way because someone up the line of command has passed down the method of operation. This method is not necessarily a part of the law or a directive directly from the Department of Agriculture. I have seen this sort of thing happen upon numerous occasions. If we are to have a satisfactory system of County Committees, the Committees must have more authority than the paid personnel so long as the decisions are made within the law. If the paid personnel are to run the show then let's stop kidding ourselves and do away with the often hopelessly useless committees. Yes I realize that this is a harsh statement but I know that there are counties where this situation does exist. Please let's put the authority back at the "grass-roots" where it belongs and where it was originally intended to be.

Secondly, I feel that it is absolutely wrong for the County Office-Manager to make or to have anything to do with making Nominations for Community Committeemen from which the county committeemen are selected. I know of counties where the nominations are made by the office manager with no consultation with anyone. Then the ballots go out for election from this small hand-picked group. How this is actually stopped I do not know. There are also many counties where the proper procedure is used. The counties with a large percentage of basic commodities seem to be much closer to the correct procedure than the counties where there is less to be gained by keeping a finger on what goes on.

Thirdly, a bit off the subject but it is my humble thinking that all conservation payments should be for longtime practices only and not for maintenance of previous practices or for lime and fertilizer alone which will benefit the operator immediately directly in proportion to the amount used.

Fourth, this is a must---All County Committee must be bona-fide Farmers, who derive the major portion of their income from farm operations."

22. "It is my feeling that there has been a considerable loss of prestige to the system in my particular county with the present arrangement of having an office manager for the county. It may be that in our county we have always had a higher quality of administration by the farmer committee members than was achieved at other places.

I am of the opinion that much of the effectiveness of the ASC and the ACP program was lost when the county manager system was installed. Prior to that time, the township committeemen received much more instruction and could answer the questions of their neighbors without having to go to the county seat. This led to a considerable loss of interest and prestige to the program. It appears to me that this led to a considerable lack of interest in the elections for county and township committeemen. It has also led to the place where really active and qualified persons will no longer allow their names to be used as candidates for election on the ballots.

I do not feel like many others, that the reason for the lack of interest is the subsidy propaganda that is passed out in the daily press and other groups. My experience in the past with farm groups in administration of other programs is that if they are given the proper instruction and proper information, they will qualify to run this, or any other, program relating to a farmer's business."

E. Excerpts from Letters from State Commissioners of Agriculture

1. ".... in strengthening the ASC Committee System, I have two comments to make along this line.

   "First, that the county committee be elected on a staggered term of one member for one year; one member for two years; one member for three years, with the provisions that a committee member going out of office at the end of his term could be re-elected at the county convention by voting delegates. The staggered committee system would enable, at all times, to keep one or more who are familiar with the program and would make it much easier on the county administrative officer.

   "Second, within the framework of the law, I think it would strengthen the committee system, both at the state and county level, if the county and state committeemen were given as much flexibility as possible in decisions to be made to adjust various parts of programs to their area and locality. In past administrations, we have seen all the rules and regulations pipelined down to the local level; and in many cases, they proved very difficult to administer."

2. "There may be need for the selection of commodity advisory committees which can advise and assist the state committees in those areas where they are a considerable number of commodity programs in operation. The state and county committees cannot be expected to be familiar with the production and marketing practices in all commodity fields; . . . :

   ". . . it is suggested that some form of nomination procedure should be established, and also the membership of these committees should be selected without regard to their political affiliations. Instead, their appointments should be based almost entirely upon their own ability and competence to carry out the work.

   "With respect to commodity programs which affect more than one state, there is likely to be a problem of insuring uniformity of interpretation of the regulations and procedures. This calls for extra care on the part of the Federal Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Administration to make sure that all state administrators and ASC committees are clearly informed with respect to policies and procedures."

3. "I certainly want to compliment the Secretary and you folks for making a study of the various programs and the use of the farmer committees. It is my opinion that the committee system is very much worthwhile, and should be continued.

   "There is one suggestion I would like to make, and that is to have better liaison between the State Committee and the County Committees. I believe it probably would be advisable to have additional district men under the direct control of the State ASC Committee, who would be able to spend more time with the county committees and guide them in the policies of the Department of Agriculture in the ASC program. I know full well that many times the county committee is at a loss to know exactly what to do in regard to some of the decisions that must be made on the county level. With well-trained men, many of these problems could be eliminated at the start."

4. ". . . I would say that the county ASC Committees are doing a good job in assisting farmers with their farm problems."

5. "... I think that the Committee system has given as adequate an administration at the local level as is possible. Personally I would recommend no changes in the local Committee system. The principal difficulty with the farm programs has been at the Congressional level in that a majority of Congress has not seen fit to chart the best type farm program possible."

6. "A question was raised, however, as to the possibility of simplifying our methods of election of county committees. ..... Perhaps this point could be reviewed by your committee, and action taken to simplify the system of elections."

7. "I am sure of one thing and that is that only committeemen who believe in the program should be permitted to hold office; therefore, an oath of belief and intent of upholding the principles of the program should be given each officer before he is installed. This should go from the township committeeman on up to the highest elected official. Frankly I am a little tired of watching men who are committed to a different course of action than the program suggests sit in these offices and run them without sympathy to their purposes."

8. "I believe, in general, a majority of the farmers and agricultural people of this area would agree that the principle of the committee system is desirable. I believe there would be pretty general agreement, also, that for the committee system to work properly, it must be based on some very definite standards. For instance, the committeemen must be used in an advisory capacity for the service they can render, and their services must be held completely separate from political partisanship. They must operate in a system where information and advice can flow from the rural area to points of authority and not in a situation where all dictates come from the top down. The committees must not be used strictly as a political organization to sponsor or promote a specific program or philosophy."

9. "We believe an active committee system is basic to the maintenance of good public relations and the development of ASC programs adapted to local conditions. If farmers share certain decisions and have a hand in policy matters, it stimulates interest and support.

   "We feel community, county and state committees should be strengthened. Community committees should be afforded adequate opportunity to participate in county program development and advise with the county committee on the operation of the various projects. Active community committeemen are most effective in solving local administrative problems. Their contacts are invaluable.

   "County committees, we believe, should handle most of the policy decisions. Office administrators ought to have the responsibility of the routine business. If county committees fully utilize the community committeemen, the appreciation and acceptance of the program will improve.

   "It is our opinion that state committees need to visit county offices and county officials as often as possible. Frequent contact with county office personnel will result in a better understanding of the problems and opportunities of the program. Frequent contact and a better acquaintance is essential in coordinating these two levels of administration. Without county visits by state committeemen, certain problems could go uncorrected for an unreasonable time. We believe frequent visits with county officials and agricultural leaders will result in a better understanding of the objectives of the program and its operation.

"We feel that our State ASC program has excellent leadership. It is making an outstanding contribution to agriculture and we appreciate the opportunity to make these comments. We are convinced that the committee system is fundamental to good community and county relations."

10. "We have been very fortunate in getting men to serve on our County committees as well as the State committee who were truly interested in agriculture and do a good job for the industry as a whole. We have been reasonably free from political interference and as far as I can see, the committee system has worked well here."

11. "The following comments may be of assistance in your study.

    "A definite weakness exists where attempts to administer the program have been made with people unfamiliar with administrative procedure.

    "Too often the selection of committee members has not been a manifestation of widespread interest and participation by farmers as evidenced by the relatively small vote.

    "The operational procedures have been improved through the use of appointed administrative officers better qualified to carry out their duties in the program than many of the elected persons. The effectiveness of the program often depends upon the breadth and understanding of the committee available to them for advice.

    "The real merit of farmer committees would be more effectively used with a combination of elected and appointed committeemen. This group could give sound grassroots advice to the duly appointed administrative officers."

12. "... I think the present system is sound but would like to offer the following suggested changes:

    "Committeemen need more exposure to, and study of, existing laws and regulations. Few committeemen can spend one or two days a week in the County Office and keep abreast of the situation much less well informed.

    "Committeemen should be elected for staggered times so that experienced members would always be available to assist and guide the newcomer.

    "Certain additional authorities should be vested in State committees so that they might correct situations which arise from time to time, without the necessity of time consuming and circumventious procedures."

13. "Local county ASC committees that are elected by the farmers themselves surely should be given more voice in the administering of farm programs. The administration of any farm program would surely be much better administered as much as possible on a local level.

    "Another comment I might make in this regard is that I feel that it is difficult to attempt acreage allotments on a national level as agricultural problems vary widely from region to region and state to state. Any possible changes that could be made to place control more on a local level would surely be to the best interests of the farmers."

14. "I can honestly say that we believe the committee is doing a good job in this state and that the system of obtaining advice and counsel has been well taken care of through able administration."

15. "Basically, I believe the ASC committee system is excellent and more of the programs should be based on this type of system. The strong point is elective county committees and the weakness is that the state committee are not elected by the farmers and the ranchers of the state."

16. "I do not claim to be the best informed person on the ASC Committee System, but I am impressed by the lack of criticism which I have received. Surely, you could not expect any system to be perfect; however, in my opinion, the administration of the farm program through the ASC Committee System has, with few exceptions, been highly satisfactory. I have no changes to recommend which I think would, in the over all, improve what we now have."

17. ".... first I would like to say that I have not had an opportunity to even study the systems and would not be qualified to make any suggestions until this could be done; but I will say that I am highly in favor of some type local control of which this is, of course, and certainly see no reason to reshuffle a system that is working (if this is) just because of a little bad publicity that came about in the Estes Episode.

"I think that consideration should be given to the fact that this system has been in effect for many years under both Republican and Democratic Administrations and because of one or two such episodes that have probably been magnified many times in the newspapers, to redo and reconstruct a complete system would, in my opinion, probably be unjustified."

18. "County committees are elected by the participating farmers and to my personal knowledge serve with sincerity and dedication. State committee members have generally received appointments on ability and prior service and have been very capable and sincere in meeting the problems of the committee.

"I will be frank in stating that I fear an encroachment on this presently nonpartisan organization of partisan and departmental politics. If my fears should be borne out it would harm the program materially. Farmers would not have the dedication to serve their neighbors if they felt that they were being unduly influenced by political pressures. Another weakness which should be guarded against is an apparent human tendency to regiment the public. It is already necessary for a farmer to get ASC permission to carry on a large number of his activities. Extension of such regimentation should be resisted.

"It is my considered judgement that the State Extension Service should be given more direct responsibility for the administration of the county level functions. I believe that this would develop economies in the present cost of the program and would improve acceptance of the program and the services performed under it. If an Assistant County Agent could replace the salaried County Supervisor there could be exchange of work within the County Agent staff and constant supervision of the activity by a County Agent.

"It is possible that State and County committees should have more authority than they presently have to develop practices needed within a locality and not necessarily included in the Federal handbook. Actually, I am not qualified to express an informed opinion on this matter, but I do place a high value to local authority.

"At the State committee level I would urge that appointments by the Secretary of Agriculture always be based on ability, experience and acceptance by the farmers. Political party affiliation should not be a factor in these appointments.

"Finally, I will express a hope that if and when our National Agricultural Program eliminates or reduces the need for the ASCS that the Department meet its responsibility by quickly adjusting the service. I realize that this is a difficult responsibility and that internal pressures will normally seek to perpetuate any service."

19. "It has been our observation that the local farmer elected county committee is the most democratic system to represent the farmer. As long as the committeemen are not full time paid administrators at the county level, the obligation of the committee member is to the group which elects him as their representative.

"This system has prevailed throughout the southeast but for a period of time the midwest committee members were full time employees. The result was most unsatisfactory and discontinued a few years ago.

".... as far as I know the present system is apparently working satisfactorily. We would oppose returning to a nationwide system as existed in the midwest.

"The weaknesses of the ASC program is undoubtedly more prominent at the national level and possibly due to lack of a well designed system of inner control.

"Political debts, regardless of the administration, have no place in any farm program. Agriculture has been a "whipping boy" for vested interested and certainly no farm program should be administered so as to merit such criticism.

"Regardless of administrative changes no employee controlling distribution of federal funds should be appointed without bonding protection to insure the treasury against incompetency or collusion."

20. "In my opinion, the greatest weakness of the program is the size complexity and conflicting policies as well as the availability of tremendous amounts of money and the grants of rights to produce various crops which have very substantial financial implications. This procedure and policy is established by Congress and the Administrators of the program should not be criticized for conflicting policies.

"Every possible effort should be made to secure competent, public spirited persons for the state and county committees. Preferably these should be the people who have come to the top through the various farm organizations and have gotten there by demonstrating their leadership and who have demonstrated that farmers have confidence in them. Political appointments and political influence must be absolutely eliminated if these programs are to continue with the support of farmers and the general public."

21. "At this time I have no suggestions to recommend to your Committee. I am, indeed, interested in this important study, and shall appreciate your keeping me informed on your findings."

22. ".... undoubtedly a thorough review of the committee system operations will probably result in you recommending modernization. My own feeling is that communications have not always been the best nor have operations been publicized to the extent that is desired. But at the same time, the theoretical advantages of the farmer committee in my mind certainly out-weigh an alternative of the committee being replaced by federal administrators. The committee does tend to evaluate federal action and I think, in a sense, will tend to check federal power.

"The committee has had the purpose of keeping farmers informed, particularly those who participate in the programs. Furthermore the committee system has placed responsibility on the farmers to make the programs work. As you know in many areas farmers accepted that responsibility and effectively discharged their obligation. By the same token, one of the weaknesses in the system occurred in areas where farmers and committees failed to accept the responsibility which the law in the program imposed on them. Those committees that became a rubber stamp for staff recommendations certainly were derelict in their duty."

23. "The present community and county committee system should be eliminated and a new plan developed. I would recommend that there would still be three committee members and that they be elected for three years with term staggered and election held each year; that these committee members be nominated for election by the organized agricultural groups in the county; further that no two members could serve from same community or township; the members should be elected by a mail ballot; county committeemen to be compensated on a per diem basis together with an expense account for necessary travel expenses; the county officer managers to be employed by the State ASC Committee upon recommendation of county committee; less authority to be placed in the hands of office managers and more in the hands of county committee; allocation of funds be made on need rather than number of cooperators in order that projects may be seen through to completion; that county committees be required to accept recommendations from an advisory committee composed of a representative of each agricultural organization or group in the county; meetings to be called as often as needed by the Chairman of the County ASC Committee but to be held a minimum of twice yearly; that the state committee permit counties with a peculiar problem, leeway to overcome same for that given area."

24. "It was my privilege while in Extension work and was County Agricultural Agent to start out with the old AAA programs and I have always been of the opinion that they do an exceptionally fine job and certainly make a great contribution to Agricultural programs at the local level.

"I personally believe that it is important to have the State Committee review questionable local situations because it can certainly put a local agricultural producer on the spot with his neighbor or neighbors to have to make a decision in opposition to a personal interest. This can get to cause some serious feeling at the local level which committeemen should not have to assume, except in rare cases.

"I certainly believe that it is well to consider and to present that which is possible and feasible to strengthen the ASC committee system and to place as much authority as possible in the hands of the State Committee."

25. "The farmer committee system of farm program administration generally appears to be working satisfactorily.

"A tendency towards what might be termed "empire building" on the part of the ASC is apparent. For instance, many county offices are moving into new or remodeled quarters at considerable increase in cost with little increased effectiveness.

"In my judgment better qualified county committees could be established if membership was by appointment rather than election.

"Expansion of informational and training programs might be undertaken whereby local committee members would better understand the programs and national problems while given an opportunity to convey and discuss their problems with federal and state officials.

"If any farm program is to be effectively administered, the local committees should not be given more powers.

"Probably one of the basic problems is the situation of a large number of counties in the United States, many of them sparsely populated. Perhaps a consolidation, in some instances, of county committees into area or regional groups could be worked out."

26. ".... I have discussed the question on occasion with my staff. It is our view that the ASC work has been effective, has carried out its objectives, and has been maintained on a high plane. We believe that the success of ASC here is due to the high caliber of the men appointed to the Committee and to the able administration of its executive director here. Under the circumstances, I would not attempt any recommendation for improvement."

27. "I wish to advise that the only suggestion we might have at this time is that qualifications on committee or office managers be thoroughly evaluated, and that one new member would replace a retiring member on the committee each year. In other words on a rotation system. We believe this would give each new member the benefit of experienced members."

28. "We are not directly connected with this activity; however, we have had the opportunity of observing their operations throughout the state. To more effectively carry out the responsibilities, would suggest that county committees be elected for a longer period than one year."

Additional Excerpts from Letters received from Commissioners of Agriculture

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28. "We are not directly connected with this activity; however, we have had the opportunity of observing their operations throughout the State. To more effectively carry out the responsibilities, would suggest that county committees be elected for a longer period than one year."

29. "I am of the opinion that appointments should be limited to people having a thorough understanding of agriculture and the ASC program. These qualifications could be met by actual participation in the program for a certain length of time, or by close association with the program."

30. "1. Effective farmer participation is sound, basic and necessary. This is especially true of programs relating to production adjustment and price support because this is the core of the farm problem.

2. This participation by farmers must be from the standpoint of program and policy development as well as administration.

3. The principle of the committee system can provide effective farmer participation and it must be preserved. It has served well in the past. With some change and updating it will continue to have tremendous potential for future good.

4. A committee system must do these things:

(a) Provide for a free flow of ideas (grass roots thinking) from the farm, the community, the county, the State on up to Washington.

(b) Provide a sounding board for national proposals - direct line right down through to community and farm - a means by which early evaluation can be obtained.

(c) Provide for direct farmer participation in administration. Programs that deal so directly with so many farmers and so greatly affect their operations and incomes need be administered so that farmers feel that they share in the responsibility and that their interests are fairly protected. The system must provide for farmer representation to carry broad responsibilities - to determine policy, to give guidance, and to reach basic and important decisions even on individual farms, and at the same time permit strictly administrative or career personnel with a reasonable degree of security and continuity to carry out basic operating responsibilities. (This is a fine and difficult line to establish, but it can be done.)

5. A properly established system of locally elected committeemen

(a) affords the opportunity to bring a nucleus of practical farmers into close program association and provide them with background information, program detail, actual operating experience, and a perspective of the total agricultural problem which should not only stimulate their interest and dedication to proper solutions, but should better equip them to analyze the need for programs, to evaluate their effectiveness and to recommend changes;

(b) provides a means of keeping programs and operations somewhat democratic rather than completely bureaucratic. Supervised judgment decisions made by locally elected farmers are much more palatable and probably more practical than those dictated by career personnel according to strictly laid down and interpreted procedures. In fact the wise use of locally elected committeemen and the resultant reliance on them for fair and equitable judgment decisions could eliminate considerable detail and red tape, and could well enhance program simplification, flexibility and general acceptance. By this means bureaucratic control can be held to a minimum - the inevitable charges of bureaucratic control can be answered;

(c) provides the opportunity for Congress and high administrators to permit certain local adaptation of national programs to best fit local circumstance - and thereby in some part to better accomplish the common sense, the practical, the simplifications so greatly needed in our national endeavors.

6. Evaluation of past. There seems to have been many versions of the committee system in effect over the years, varying considerably in different parts of the country. In some places committees have functioned pretty much as a "Board" and considerably at the will and direction of administrative personnel.

In Midwest States county committees at one time were administrators as well as policy and decision makers. Some were excellent and from their ranks came fieldmen, State committeemen, and personnel of high place in Washington. In some few spots they provided poor administration. However, in total they did an outstanding job with exceptional judgment and equity - evaluating farms, setting indexes and allotments, handling appeals and complaints, determining policy, recommending national action and procedure, exercising judgment in problem situations, dealing with and interesting farmers, pushing pencils and operating

local offices. One accomplishment never to be forgotten was the success in securing farmer release and movement of grain for foreign shipment to relieve severe food shortages at the close of World War II. This system of rather complete operation necessarily gave way to changing times. New programs, complexities of procedures, demands for efficiencies and a more direct line of authority, and the uncertainties surrounding the election of men with the capacity to organize and administer all contributed to the advent of the office manager. But even with office managers the committees in this State have continued to carry responsibility and give operational direction. They have not become mere "Boards".

7. Need for the future.

(a) There will be need for farmer participation in the formulation and execution of agricultural policy as long as a farm problem exists.

(b) The system with proper farmer representation should establish a two-way avenue (1) a direct line of communication from farm to Washington and (2) an effective chain of command that reaches down from Washington and deals with farmers.

(c) Some phases of program operations require committee handling. Actually it would be most difficult, if not impossible, for career personnel to handle such things as county planning, allotments, indexes, adjustments, approvals, etc. Therefore, something like the committee system is needed to provide judgment decisions, to take the heat, to serve as the balance wheel, to provide the understanding and make certain the farmer's interest is protected.

(d) Administrative detail can best be handled by hired personnel. The office managers, the career or strictly administrative personnel can best provide efficiency of administration, certainty that rules and regulations are observed, and a chain of command necessary to insure prompt and uniform compliance with all directives. To do this they must have a reasonable degree of continuity in service, security in their position, and sufficient authority.

(e) The responsibilities and activities of committeemen should not be too greatly restricted. Committeemen cannot be permitted to become rubber-stamps, to become the bossed rather than the boss. If they are to be effective they must be kept reasonably familiar with operational detail and program provisions, they must be used, and they must be used in an important manner.

8. Community committee. These local committeemen are the "forgotten men" of the agency. Yet, they represent a tremendously important potential force to do good and to serve in agriculture. There also are certain program operations, especially as they apply to individual farms, on which these local committeemen are best able to exercise judgment. This part of the system is not outmoded; it may need to be updated.

9. Complexities of programs. The effectiveness of farmer participation especially in administration will vary in some inverse proportion to the complexities of programs and operating procedures. I have heard joking reference to 24 feet of procedure. If this is true even the full time experts will have trouble.

10. Miscellaneous considerations.

(a) Possibly there should be only one instead of three regular community committeemen. This assumes that on this reduced basis each remaining committeeman would be better schooled, used more frequently, and made more a part of the agency.

(b) Possibly the county chairman should be upgraded. He might be used more, the other members less.

(c) Possibly the security of the office manager in his position and his responsibility to State level of authority for properly operating each program should be increased.

(d) Possibly the State chairman should be employed full time.

11. Some of the decisions relative to the committee system necessarily must be related to the type and scope of programs that might be expected in the future.

12. There have been criticisms of committee operations in the past - charges of favoritism, ineptitude, lack of knowledge, considering the job as a pension, spending unnecessary time in the office, etc. Some instance of each charge probably can be found, but these certainly are in the minority. Furthermore, these things are not inherent in the system, they are the result of personal weaknesses and of failure to properly use the system."

31. "My observations or suggestions are as follows:

1. Generally, the county and community ASC committees have been devoted men who are doing their best to properly administer the National Farm program. There have been exceptions to this of course, and occasionally a complete county committee could be made up of men who are not as devoted to their job as others.

2. It would seem advisable that the tenure of the county office manager should be a little more definite. There is a feeling (whether or not it is true is unknown to me) some of these positions are changed without too much regard for the job the person is doing.

3. The position of the county committee should be more clearly defined. Under some of the administrations, the county committee has been somewhat of an advisory nature, and under other administrations, the county committee apparently has more power.

4. In the selection of members of the county committees, it would seem that it would be desirable if a larger number of farmers participated in the method of selection than has been shown in several instances. I know of instances where only a handful of men turned out at a committee meeting to nominate the candidate from that township for one of the county positions."

F. Excerpts from Letters from Leading Farmer Cooperative Officials

1. "I have no criticism of the present ASC committee system. My observation is, that they are doing a very good job under the present setup. I have talked with several farmers in regard to this, and they have all agreed with this statement. We are perfectly satisfied with the method of selection and the job that they are doing."

2. "The comments that I have set forth below are made upon the assumption that the ASC Committee System would operate completely outside of any partisan political consideration.

"The Strengths

1) ASC Committees can provide a two-way method of communication, from the Department to the farmers and from the farmers to the Department.

2) ASC Committees can give practical and knowledgeable assistance in connection with administration of many farm programs. ASC Committees, when given recognition and some responsibilities, will generally respond in kind.

"Weaknesses

1) Membership on County and State Committees should be subject to revolvement so that the same people do not continue to hold office from year to year. The weakness is in enabling persons with or without strong biases to continue in policy-influencing positions, new ideas and fresh approaches are important.

2) ASC Committees tend to become ineffective and frustrated when not given some responsibilities.

3) ASC Committees without participation by representatives from all organized farm groups tend to create controversies rather than to settle them.

4) The desirability of changing the areas of responsibility from a County basis to some other regional basis should be considered. The weakness being that present administrative areas are not always effective.

"Recommended Suggestions

1) An analysis should be made as to the most feasible administrative areas. A study should be given as to whether or not value of production or volume of activities should be the guide line for committee responsibility rather than a County or a State basis. Study should be given to the prospects for coordination between various branches of the Department of Agriculture, possibly through the ASC Committees. This might provide commodity representation and a broader base of participation by farm people in U.S.D.A. activities. Consideration should be given to better means of selection of State or regional committeemen so that better liason can be established between the smaller units of the State or regional units.

2) Effort should be made to assure that ASC Committee work does not become a career at any level of administration for non-career employees. It is my opinion that the failure of this administration to achieve a workable farm program can be ascribed in part to the lack of a grass root direction. The view is prevelant in too many areas that the administration's program was a "from the top down" approach to the farm problem. A thoroughly non-partisan democratically elected farmer committee system based upon work load and need, and

given some responsibilities, could move a long way toward the implementation of sound farm policies and effective administration of them."

3. "In the first place I think the local township committees should be well schooled and know the fundamental reasons why the need of a farm program. They need all the background information possible so they can understand why these duties are so important and necessary. I think good township committees are the backbone of a good committee system.

"In the second place it seems to me the State Committees should spend a little more time in the office so they have a better grasp of the problems they must contend with.

"The whole farm program is so important to all farmers and our whole economy that we need the best and most capable administrators it is possible to find."

4. "The comments furnished are the result of serious thought on the subject coupled with a background of service totaling fourteen years on the county committee, eleven of them as chairman. It is my considered opinion that the committee system is satisfactory and sound in concept. Somewhere along the line there is a lack of procedural checks and balances. Regulations have changed with such frequency and so drastically that they are in general little known. Irrespective of past mistakes and embarrasments, the committee system (farmer representation) should be retained for supervision and management.

"This discussion will be divided into four groups. State ASC Committee, County and Community Committee, County Office Manager, and General.

"The State Committee or Appointed officials should be selected from a panel of names submitted and recommended by Farm and Commodity organizations. They should be appointed for terms of sufficient length to permit their knowledge to be of service to the position. They should not be eligible for reappointment for successive terms. The terms should be staggered to avoid too drastic a changeover of committee membership. State committee members should be under the provisions of the Hatch Act.

"The county and community committee election should be returned to the Election Board Concept. This worked well in the past as a rule. I suggest that county committeemen serve tenure of three years. County committeemen are not to be nominated or elected for successive terms. The duties and responsibility of the county committee should be clearly defined and stated. Those duties are to supervise, manage and administer agricultural programs passed by the Congress. They should not exercise or be permitted the perogative of developing or creating programs as county committeemen.

"The County Office Manager must be held responsible for the operations of all facets of the Farm Programs. There should be spelled out better rules of procedure and guidelines to be established for the operations and management of the programs, taking in the office manager and the committee. The county office manager should be placed under the provisions of the Hatch Act.

"In a general way it is my considered opinion that the County Committee and County Office Manager should be required to direct their efforts and energies in the administration of farm programs already law, and not on ideas being proposed or discussed by Congress. Procedure should be established for redress in improper or unlawful administration of program by County Committee. These regulations should be of general knowledge to those participating in the programs. Eligible

voters in the election of County Committee should be restricted to those individuals, partnerships, corporations, etc., engaged in farming in each parish or county."

5. "...I have given the ASC program some serious thought and believe that the political atmosphere under which it operates is the most serious handicap.

"This atmosphere is made known through the Area Director's office and from other Washington officials, down through the State Committee and the Administrative Officer whom it hires, and thence through the Farmer Fieldmen throughout the state.

"I believe this political influence is stronger in the ASC than in any other departments. This being true results in the lack of cooperation and appreciation of the farm program on the part of many farmers.

"It is also difficult to obtain the most qualified persons in many of the positions including the County Committees themselves. In the political arena there is apt to be collusion, and a desire to manipulate for political purposes rather than to have an objective and equitable application of the farm program laws, rules and regulations.

"I believe the Committee system of locally elected County Committees is satisfactory from the standpoint of having farmers represented, and a check and balance of local thinking versus any tendency to have the pressures of politics applied. Neighbors are more likely to be fair and reasonable than might be possible in a politically dominated straight-lined Federal Agency type of structure.

"In the final analysis, the application of any farm program must be made at the local level, at least not higher than the County office. A local flavor to the administration of the program is not only more acceptable, but I think will result in better administration. Some specific suggestions might help to implement the above ideas; all of which should be made matter of law and not implemented by regulations subject to change:

1. The appointment of the State Committee on a non-partisan basis with three year rotating terms would give continuity and better acceptance of the program irregardless of the party in office.

2. Establishing the position of a Farmer Fieldman as permanent Civil Service position not subject to the will of the State Committee.

3. The election of County Committees for three year rotating terms using the same method of election as at present would give greater continuity to the program at a county level.

4. The law should require that County and State Committees be policy forming groups and operate similarly to a Board of Directors, which will give to the entire program the stature necessary to administer a large program."

6. "We believe the organizational structure initiated several years ago, making the state administrative officer responsible for the day-to-day operations of the program statewide and the county office managers responsible likewise for the program in their respective counties, was definitely a step in the right direction. We believe, however, that the elected County Committee system is good and should be retained. It can very definitely be strengthened by making it a matter of law that the elected County Committee determines policy as to administering programs, and employs the county office manager. It should operate similarly to a board of directors of farmer cooperatives or of a private organization. Elected farmers have tremendous capabilities and judgment as to methods of carrying out the program objectives, but election does not necessarily

elect a person who had experience or who has capabilities that are entailed in day-to-day operation of a county program that, in many cases, is multi-million dollar in size. I am saying, therefore, that the elected County Committee system is good and the law should probably so stipulate as to how it should operate.

"I believe sincerely that the state office should be operated in a similar manner. The State Committee should be appointed on a bi-partisan basis with the understanding that the members are appointed to serve as a Board and not to carry out the day-to-day operations. The State Committee would be more respected and would be able to do a better job of administering their responsibilities if the farmer fieldmen were Civil Service employees and were not subject to the will of the State Committee and the whim of politics.

"The very obvious political flavor that is possible in the present administration does not lend itself to respect on the part of the farmers of the state regardless of political party. Other departments of the United State Department of Agriculture do not have this same type of political influence.

"Some feel, and I concur, that appointment of members of the State Committee and election of the County Committee should be on a rotating basis with a term longer than one year. This would give continuity to the administration of the program and stature to the entire program that it so sadly needs. It would give some additional security to the office manager and to the State Administrative officer that is not apparent under the present set-up. This would make it possible, and very probable, that higher-quality individuals would be selected, or elected, and employed."

7. "For whatever they are worth, here are a few observations:

"1. The present method used, whereby farmers meet at the community level and elect by ballot the community committeemen and the chairman of the community committee, is satisfactory. The present method of having the community chairmen assemble in convention and select the members of the county committee is also satisfactory.

"2. I believe that both County and Community Committees should be elected on a three year staggered basis.

"3. Additional emphasis should be placed on keeping community and county committees informed of program procedures and operations through meetings and news letters.

"4. Budgets should be such that county committees could spend sufficient time in the operation of programs to know what their responsibilities are and to know whether or not their policies and program operations are being properly carried out by their employees.

"5. Community committeemen should be used to the fullest extent possible in helping with the initial sign-up of the various programs by making farm calls and in the administration of the programs.

"6. With the complex programs we are operating today, I believe office managers or chief clerks, or some full-time person is necessary in each county office. However, I believe from the Secretary's office on down it should be understood and emphasis should be placed on the fact that the county committee, and not this person, is responsible for the operation of the programs.

"7. One of our real problems has been the tendency to make managers feel that they have complete authority and the committees are only advisory. This has

discouraged committeemen, and in some cases has required them to act on matters about which they had very, very little information."

8. "... the high degree of acceptance of the Committee System was due to the very close working relationships of ASC (and FHA) with the College, with the Extension Service, and with the ... State Conference Board of Farm Organizations.

   "A key reason for these fine relationships was the character and caliber of the administrative employees selected — they were known, trusted and respected by farmers and farm leaders. The ASC people ... took pains to fit their programs to the varied circumstances of our agriculture. Because of these fine relationships, and whenever necessary, ... State law was modified to aid in administering these programs.

   "In those days, if I recall correctly, the ... State Conference Board of Farm Organizations was asked to suggest nominees for the State ASC Committeemen, and the terms of these committeemen were rotated.

   "With the above as background, and based on my observations, here are some additional comments and suggestions for consideration by your Committee:

   "1. The election of community and county committees by farmers in their respective areas will always provide the strongest and most acceptable committees by the farmers themselves.

   "2. Strengthen the system of nominations at the community level.

   "3. Encourage the use of mail ballots in voting for local committeemen to insure adequate participation.

   "4. Policy at all levels should be determined by the Committee, but the administration and operation of the programs themselves should be handled by trained, competent employees.

   "5. Committees at both county and state levels should have enough freedom and flexibility to adapt any given program to the particular needs of the areas they represent.

   "6. One of the strengths of the Committee System in this state has been and should be close liaison and cooperation with our land-grant college, Cornell, with the Extension Service, and with the other established farm groups, so that all can work in unison for the ultimate benefit of farmers.

   "7. On a Committee that is as important to the welfare of our agriculture as is the State ASC Committee, I strongly feel that it is desirable to have bi-partisan membership, with staggered terms of office. This builds farmer confidence."

9. "The consensus of opinion was that we have no problems in this area as far as the A. S. C. Committee system is concerned, that we know of."

10. "Basically the method of farmers electing their fellow farmers is sound. But, today so many of our committees are made up in part by professional committeemen; farmers in name only, farmers who haven't really farmed since the thirties and are on a dozen other committees. I agree they are put in by their neighbors who vote for these men because they were asked to do so, or by neighbors not exercising their right to vote.

    "Here is an example of what happened in 1962 in such a constituted committee. After the farmers had voted, the former chairman and vice-chairman, both who had served

most of the past since 1933, went "riding the roads" to see the newly elected members, asking for their votes to retain them with their former titles. On the day the committee met, someone quickly nominated these men and another "old crony" moved that they be elected by acclamation. This was done. Then the chief clerk said they would have to vote by secret ballot for these same men. Since no one else had been nominated, one committeeman challenged this action but the clerk insisted that this was regulations so they voted by secret ballot for the chairman and vice-chairman who had already been elected by acclamation.

"Such situations as this can be corrected by rotation system so that a farmer who has served a term, say three years, is no longer eligible for re-election. Qualifications of those who would be eligible for re-election should be set up; such as 75% of his income should come from farming. Really, many of our county committees in this state are known as "Mr. Jones' Committee" and these old timers like the Mr. Joneses are rubber stamps of the employees. Because they are no longer recognized by the new generation of live wire farmers, they hurt the entire purpose of the programs and even though many talk big they are truly liabilities to a political party.

"Farmers who are elected to serve on county committees complain that there are no decisions to make. The county employees, after a few years in office, seem to become quite dictatorial in their attitude. For instance, in this same county where the chairman was first elected by acclamation and then by secret ballot, wheat allotments were brought up for discussion. A newly elected committeeman called the committee's attention to one farm allocation that, because of a personal knowledge, was not right. The chief clerk quickly told him that a correction could not be made because all the acres for the county had already been allocated. After some more conversation the clerk admitted that it could be changed but that this one change would mean changing every wheat allotment in the county. After some discussion, this committeeman gave up in disgust and said to forget it. I understand this particular committee runs into all-out resistance from the employees on every change or difference of opinion on matters brought up.

"If there are no decisions for the farmers to make, it would seem best to drop all the committees and save the Department of Agriculture's funds for other uses. A producing farmer of this age is not going to take time out from his own operation where labor is exceedingly short to sit with a group who is just asked to okay the finished work of the employees.

"In summary I suggest dismissing the committees or giving them some real authority over the local employees and permitting them to make their own decisions; maybe they should have executive sessions with no employees present as a part of every meeting.

"Set up regulations where only bona fide producing farmers are eligible for election. Stagger the terms of these new boards and limit these terms so that these new faces of the present generation with new ideas could be brought into the circle of administration where new ideas are badly needed. Thus if in the past there has been favoritism shown or unfairness in allocations, these new committeemen could correct these inequalities and strengthen the integrity of the whole farm program."

11. ".... from all indications they are doing an excellent job of trying to administer economically the program that is formulated.

"It is my understanding that there is considerable difficulty arising from the grass roots as to some of the problems, and personally there seems to be some conflict between the state and the county group. Just what is the background of the so-called revolting or controversy, I have not been close enough to know. As stated the fruit area does not apply directly to the support program of ASC. There is a little activity

through the soil conservation district but in most cases, 9 out of 10 of the producers would not know the make up or background of the ASC activity. Most of their contact is related to the SC District as a subdivision.

"It is quite apparent to many of us as lay-people and observers, rather than participants, that there has been more difficulty arise and abuse accrued through the ramification and looseness of the Grain Crop storage program than any other phase of the ASC program.

"As to recommended steps for effective administration, it would seem that if it were constructively possible to get government out of the lending on crops and where there is surplus, establish a purchase and sale agreement, and take over eventually from that point on, in the handling of our surplus crops, there would certainly eliminate a lot of the ramifications of the administrative weaknesses in the present program. This perhaps is neither feasible nor possible."

12. "I have been informed that the chairmen of the county ASC have been competent persons and that our local ASC county operations has been much above the average of the state because of competent leadership of the chairmen in the county office.

"I have felt that the men doing the local work of administration which we have come in contact in participation in various ASC activities were doing the best job they could and were taking their responsibilities serious. However, there have been times that we thought they were not as competent as they might have been. On the other hand, if competent full-time people were employed in this capacity there is no doubt what they would be more efficient but perhaps not as well received by the individual farmers if they were strangers in the community.

"It would seem to me that any operation such as this, either system would have their merits and their limitations. Frankly, as far as the operation of this type of program in the smaller farm communities is concerned, there is merit in having local people administering it."

13. "I realize that any system as wide spread as the ASC unfortunately has people connected with it who are sometimes referred to as bad apples, and in my own opinion these committees are made up of well meaning farm leaders who are trying to do a good job in operating under the committee's system.

"Suggestions

"1. Limit term of office of committeemen - Rotate chairman.

"2. More effective carrying out of the program by a better understanding of the objectives of the program and checking to see that practices are correctly carried out.

"3. More policy decisions with farmer committee advice being heeded more regularly. Less decisions from the 'top down.'

"4. Elect state committeemen by or from the County committee group. (If necessary, with the county party chairman's approval.)

"5. Seek top agricultural men for office if committeemen are to be appointed. Selection of committeemen should not be involved in politics."

14. ".... I would like to make the following comments:

"1. The method of electing the local county committee to serve on the ASC board should be nominated by the chairmen of each township, and the nominees voted upon by the farmers of the county by mail ballot.

"2. It is a general consensus of opinion the local ASC committee should have a broader area, in which to operate, administering its various programs. Many farmers, as well as employees of the ASC office feel that the instructions of programs handed down to them are limited in scope, as to handling arbitral problems, which result in farmers not fully understanding them. In my observation, I believe it would be advisable, and certainly strengthen the ASC committee system for USDA to set up principles that the local county committee could follow, and let the committee themselves settle many of the problems arising on a county level, as to the administration of the programs. I believe a control of these principles could be set up through your auditing or supervision department out of the State office.

"This seems to be one of the main weaknesses of the ASC committee system. The farmer has lost confidence in his own elected county officials, because he believes they have no authority to make decisions, other than to send it to the State ASC committee, and they in turn refer to the ASC department in Washington. It is through this red tape that many farmers have become disgusted with the farm program, and are unwilling to cooperate with their local ASC committee in its administration."

"Personally, I believe the major problem the ASC committee system is confronted with, is a matter of education. Almost every farmer I talk to in my business believes we must have a farm program, and most of them will abide by any program that Congress approves, recommended by the Secretary of Agriculture, providing they fully understand it. It has always been a rule of thumb that confusion creates negative thinking."

15. "We are all agreed that the farmer committee structure is invaluable in the administration of a farm production program. We must realize this system can have many weaknesses by having farmer committeemen elected who are not really conscious of their many duties. I personally believe this can be overcome somewhat by selecting a nominating committee who could study the qualifications and the talents of the men who are nominated both as township and county committeemen. This nominating committee could be selected by the farm agencies in the county, such as agricultural extension, soil conservation service, etc., and should be composed of one person from each township within the county."

"I'm also of the opinion that a lack of understanding and possible some misunderstanding is one of the greatest obstacles to be overcome in the administration of a farm production program."

"I have noticed that in counties where there is good cooperation between the county farmer committeemen and the agricultural extension office, there is an increased endeavor to create understanding among the county farmers as to the details of the farm program in effect. Therefore, I believe this cooperation is a must in the administration of a farm program by the farmer committee system."

"There should be a close working relationship between the various agricultural agencies within the county in achieving the goals of the total program. One of the perplexing problems a farm program must deal with is overcoming the indifferent attitude farmers seem to develop when a "going and effective program" has solved or is solving their overall production problems."

16. "One of the glaring weaknesses of the Department and of the ASC committee system is that they have been trying to promote new laws and regulations and even attempting to lobby with members of Congress for the passage of new farm legislation. This should be prohibited."

"We do not think it is the job of the Secretary or any of his employees or elected committeemen to try, in any way, to influence Congress in changing present law or in the enactment of new legislation."

"The Secretary of Agriculture, his staff and the elected county ASC committees have done a very commendable job in most cases in administering their agricultural programs."

"It is my feeling if the committeemen are to be elected by farmers, then the Secretary of Agriculture should not have the power to remove these men from office as he now can do. If the Secretary of Agriculture is going to have the authority to remove local committee members from office, then they should be appointed by the Secretary in the first place, so that everyone will know that they are either employees or appointees of the Secretary of Agriculture."

17. "The mechanics of receiving and processing forms is running fairly smoothly. However, a problem exists in the variances in procedure among all the counties. For example, some counties permit fertilizer grade substitution on an equivalent basis within the same ratio, while others require county approval. We prefer the automatic equivalent substitution.

We favor the purchase order system as compared to the assignment program. There are two reasons for this preference.

a. There is much quicker reimbursement from the Government through the purchase order method.

b. Record keeping is far less complicated for purchase orders."

18. "Staggered terms for committeemen so that whole committees would not come on or go off at one time and not be familiar with the work. Generally speaking many of the committeemen were not too well informed of their duties or responsibilities, and that certainly, if whole committees moved in and out, that could seriously affect this matter.

Only the larger farmers seemed to get out, push and shove and be elected as committeemen. There was a feeling among the smaller growers that they were not represented on the ASC Committees.

A farmer could not succeed himself on a committee, he would have to stay off a year or two years before he could go back on. This would give more farmers in a county some experience on the committee."

G. Letter of Appreciation

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

August 22, 1962

Dear Sir:

I want to thank you most sincerely for your letter on the ASC Committee System. I greatly appreciate your taking the time to counsel with our Study Committee. I also want to assure you that you have been of considerable help to our study, and your views will be given the most careful consideration.

Sincerely yours,

A. Lars Nelson
Chairman, Study Committee

III. FIELD INTERVIEWS BY STUDY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

A. INTRODUCTION

At its first meeting, the Study Committee decided that visits should be made by committee members and the staff to a goodly number of State and county ASC offices in different sections of the country.

The staff director was instructed to prepare notes for use by each committee member making such a visit, in order that each visit might as nearly as possible cover the same basic questions. Reports on each visit, in some cases oral, in other cases written, were presented to the Study Committee.

During a six-week period, 36 visits were made in 21 States. The table below shows the distribution of visits by ASCS areas:

State Field Surveys Made by Members of the Study Committee and the Staff Director

Midwest Area	
Illinois	(2)
Indiana	(3)
Iowa	(2)
Kentucky	(1)
Minnesota	(2)
Ohio	(2)
Wisconsin	(1)
13 visits in 7 States	

Northeast Area	
New York	(2)
Virginia	(1)
West Virginia	(1)
4 visits in 3 States	

Northwest Area	
Idaho	(2)
Nebraska	(3)
Washington	(1)
6 visits in 3 States	

Southeast Area	
Louisiana	(1)
Mississippi	(1)
North Carolina	(4)
6 visits in 3 States	

Southwest Area	
California	(1)
Colorado	(2)
Kansas	(1)
Texas	(2)
Utah	(1)
7 visits in 5 States	

B. GUIDELINE NOTES FOR FIELD INTERVIEWS

July 17, 1962

Notes for Consideration of Study Committee Members
Visiting State and County Offices

Prepared by
Joseph Hajda
Staff Director, Study Committee

A. The Visit to the State Office

In interviews with State Chairman, State Executive Director, farmer members of State Committee, State Extension Director, key personnel in the State Office, and farmer fieldmen:

1. Confirm previous understanding on organization, personnel, and budget.

2. Confirm process of selection of State Committee, State Executive Director, key personnel in the State Office, and farmer fieldmen.

3. Review qualifications data of State Committee members, State Executive Director, key personnel in the State Office, and farmer fieldmen.

4. Review status and highlights of current program operations.

5. Review scope and extent of participation of State Committee Chairman and farmer members in

   (a) development of farm programs
   (b) handbook and local procedural issuances
   (c) formal and informal communications with ASCS Washington offices
      (1) sources of advice (who gets what from whom)
      (2) frequency of Washington staff visits (who visits whom, when, why)
      (3) meetings on problems
      (4) workshops or conferences
      (5) extent of follow-up by Washington
      (6) handling of Internal Audit reports
      (7) handling of Investigations reports
      (8) complaints about forms; understanding of regulations and instructions

6. Review same regarding State Executive Director and key State Office personnel.

7. Review the administrative and program limits on discretion, and the checks in the system against the abuse of discretion.

8. Review system and methods for farmer fieldmen

   (a) strengths and weaknesses: selection, qualifications, and training
   (b) process of State Committee Chairman and farmer members review of fieldmen functions
   (c) operating problems and actions taken to cope with them

9. Review relations with Extension Service, Soil Conservation Service, Farmers Home Administration, State and local governments.

10. Discuss questions pertinent to space, equipment, and facilities.

11. Review problems related to County Office administration:

    (a) role of county committee chairman, farmer members, and extension agent
    (b) role of county office manager and full-time staff
    (c) role of part-time staff
    (d) selection of county committees
    (e) determination of criteria for selection of county office manager
    (f) training of county committee members and office managers
    (g) communications system with county committees and office managers
    (h) supervision of county office operations, including handling of claims by CCC and ASCS
    (i) conflicts with State, local, and other agencies and individuals
    (j) problems arising if county employees were made subject to federal Civil Service rules and status as to selections, retention, and removal
    (k) objectives of National Association of County Office Employees

12. Discuss alternatives to State Committee appointive system, and county committee elective system.

13. Review process of community committee elections, and different voting methods.

14. Discuss the real operating responsibilities of the State Committee--are they too burdensome or too light?

15. Discuss feasibility of exploring views of previous State Committee members.

16. Review sources of criticism of farmer committee system: formal and informal evidence.

17. Examine adequacy of planning ahead by State Committee on program operations, including

    (a) training activities
    (b) recruitment problems
    (c) supervision
    (d) communications
    (e) farmer participation

18. Explore the question of frequent changes in farm policy (via Congressional action) and their effect on the ASC system in the State.

B. Visit to the County Office

In interviews with county committee chairman and farmer members, county office managers, extension agents, and personnel in the county offices:

1. Confirm previous understanding on organization, personnel and budget.

2. Confirm process of selection of county committee, county office manager, and staff.

3. Review qualifications data for all of them.

4. Review status and highlights of current program operations.

5. Review scope and extent of participation of county committee in

    (a) development of farm programs

(b) formal and informal communications with the State offices
   (1) sources of advice (who gets what from whom)
   (2) frequency of farmer fieldmen and other State staff visits (who visits whom, when, why)
   (3) meetings: regular and special
   (4) workshops and other training sessions
   (5) extent of follow-up by State office
   (6) handling of Internal Audit reports
   (7) handling of Investigations reports
   (8) complaints about forms
   (9) understanding of regulations and instructions
   (10) review of appeals
   (11) community committee elections
   (12) county committee selection

6. Discuss same regarding county office manager and staff.

7. Review the administrative and program limits on discretion, and the checks in the system against the abuse of discretion.

8. Examine controls of CCC sight drafts and the handling of debt register matters.

9. Review techniques used to detect maladministration in any form.

10. Discuss methods of communication with community committeemen.

11. Discuss methods of communication with farmers.

12. Review relations with other USDA agencies, State and local governments and other organized groups.

13. Examine the question of membership of county office employees in the National Association of County Office Employees.

14. Explore the question of county office employees becoming federal Civil Service employees.

15. Review the use of part-time staff.

16. Discuss the problem of county and community committeemen who are not in sympathy with current farm programs.

17. Review sources of criticism of farmer committee system; formal and informal.

18. Review comparative county office strengths and weaknesses; difficulties and conflicts.

19. Review adequacy of planning ahead by the county committee and office manager.

20. Explore the question of frequent changes in farm policy (via Congressional action) and their effect on the ASC system in the county.

C. SAMPLE INTERVIEW BY A COMMITTEE MEMBER

A SAMPLE STATE ASCS OFFICE VISIT
BY A MEMBER OF THE STUDY COMMITTEE

August 15, 1962

Present: Chairman, ASCS State Committee
Member, ASCS State Committee
Member, ASCS State Committee
Member, Study Committee

I. GENERAL SITUATION AND OPERATIONS

State committeemen are meeting county committees in a district to assist them and bring information to them.

There is a desire to go back to strong county and community committeemen in ASC operations.

Where county committee has gone back to running office there has been real improvement in knowledge of program and service to farmers.

They would like to be without office managers and use a chief clerk.

Only way decisions can be made is for State, county and community committeemen to have knowledge and information necessary to make intelligent decision and exercise proper discretion.

They are asking that the State committee hold meetings with community committeemen to help them and to get them to indicate their responsibilities.

Community committeemen are met on the street and questioned about program, economics, compliance and general advice and find themselves without adequate information to discharge this responsibility.

II. COUNTY COMMITTEE

Meets on office manager's call. Recently only one-half day in two weeks. County committee becomes rubber stamp--only makes decisions on referrals or on troubles and cases.

Need to reassert both policy determination and judicial function as well as control of office manager and total program application.

Almost everyone wanted to know, why do we need an office manager--why a go-between for $7,000 to $8,000. Why not go back to chief clerk responsible to county committee to supervise staff operations.

When farmers come in, the first thing they ask is to see a county committeeman. If they don't succeed, then they call the committeeman at home for the information they seek.

III. FIELDMEN—RESPONSIBILITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

All fieldmen have been farmers or have lived on farms.

Only two fieldmen who have not been on county committee. None are University graduates. They have taken additional work after High School.

Fieldmen meet with State committeemen regularly once a month.

IV. STATE COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

Chairman has been active in AAC, PMA, ASC and ASCS since 1933. Diversified farmer: general cereals, wheat, corn, oats, alfalfa, red, sweet clover. Wheat Commission.

Member: Father was community committeeman and county committeeman. Diversified farmer. Cattle feeder. Has own herd on irrigated section. Former county committeeman.

Member: Community committee, last 7-8 years county committee. Big wheat farmer and safflower grower.

V. COMMUNITY COMMITTEE - UPGRADING JOB OF WORK

First question raised - how much does it cost. The success of the program rests on their shoulders. Must be educated on program and background.

They set aside a day for community committee to get one or two fellows interested in a new practice in ACP and they've succeeded and are already out of money.

Community committeeman must have enough time to digest program in order to dispense information about it effectively.

State ASCS Information Chief has newsletter going to community committeemen and they appreciate it. Goes out under State Committee's name.

Have couple men going out to hold county informational meeting in all areas.

Could have each area broken up into smaller divisions for ease in contacting the committee people.

VI. CHOICE OF STATE COMMITTEE

If State committeemen were elected who were unfavorable to program they would be apt to wreck the program.

System - Appointment by Secretary of Agriculture through normal channels from a list of capable people on basis of farm organization recommendation and others.

VII. NATIONAL COMMITTEE SUGGESTED

Suggested we have a National Committee for ASCS to advise Secretary and help coordinate administrative operations.

Some operations people going to Washington, D. C. have taken off overalls in Washington and forgotten where they originated.

National procedure would need simplification.

Set up rules and regulations so that every one could understand and apply procedure. Need to cut red tape a little.

National Committee should be non-partisan. Bona fide family type farmer.

VIII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Executive Director resigned from State committee to take the job. Had been community committeeman and county committeeman.

Sympathetic to farm program—objectives same.

Around 20 States at meeting in Denver. All Chairmen had good bull session confirming their type of operation. Wanted USDA to abolish Benson system and get back to pre-Benson system.

Executive Directors are good men but they get off on a tangent. Heavy invasion of policy functions of State committee.

IX. MISCELLANEOUS

Want county staff people to have benefits of civil service without putting them under civil service.

County committee can fire office manager as long as not under civil service.

NASCO is O. K.

Need to have some place to move up to in the system to emphasize and stimulate ability and proficiency in administration.

Biggest weakness is to stay too long in the system.

If we educate community committeemen we will be based strongly in the community and thus strengthen all program operations.

D. LETTER OF APPRECIATION

October 31, 1962

To: All Participants in Field Interviews by Study Committee Members

From: A. Lars Nelson, Chairman
Study Committee Appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture to Review ASC Committee System

Subject: Appreciation for Contribution and Cooperation

I want to thank most sincerely all members of State and county ASCS committees, State Executive Directors and their staffs, County Office Managers and their staffs, who participated in the field interviews by Members of the Study Committee and its staff during July, August, and September of 1962.

These 36 field visits covered 21 States in all parts of the country, and included interviews and meetings with hundreds of ASCS personnel. The interest shown in our work, and the unfailing courtesy and cooperation shown to us, is deeply appreciated by all Members of the Study Committee.

The field surveys proved to be the most important source of information used in the deliberations of the Study Committee. The assistance and counsel of all participants made it possible for the Study Committee to recommend improvements in the administration of farm programs authorized by law, and was greatly appreciated.

IV. DIRECT ELECTION OF ASC COUNTY COMMITTEES

Prepared by
Joseph Hajda
Staff Director, Study Committee
and
Associates

Washington, D. C.
September 7, 1962

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PART I. DIRECT ELECTION OF ASC COUNTY COMMITTEES

A. Introduction

The first stages of the original Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA) programs were handled by temporary local committees either appointed or elected. The elective principle prevailed everywhere soon thereafter. The cooperating producers, i.e., those farmers who signed an adjustment contract and thus became members of the local production-control association, elected community committees from among themselves, consisting from three to five representatives. The chairmen of all community committees in a county elected the county committee, consisting of from three to five members.

In the initial period several commodity committees could be organized in a county. After the passage of the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act of 1936 committee duplications were eliminated and a single elected farmer committee served all commodity groups in any one county.

The elective principle on the local level of farm programs administration was further strengthened and clarified in the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938. The Act directed the Secretary to use local committees, and to designate local administrative areas as units for administration of programs authorized by law. It stipulated that no such local area should include more than one county or parts of different counties. The Act provided for two distinct stages of electoral system in all multi-community counties, i.e., counties composed of more than one local area:

1. Direct election of community committees by the farmers, and
2. indirect election of county committees by the farmer delegates assembled in a convention.

The Act stated that the community and county committees were to be elected annually, and that they were to be composed of no more than three farmer members each.[1/] Administrative regulations have supplemented the law by providing for such things as a choice among methods of election of community committees and for the fixing of dates on which the elections were to be held.

B. Present Direct Election in One-Community Counties

Before turning to consideration of a general system of direct election for county committees, it should be noted that about nine percent of the county committees were directly

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1/ The Act also provided that "The local committee shall elect a secretary and may utilize the county agricultural extension agent for such purpose. The county committee shall select a secretary who may be the county agricultural extension agent. If such county agricultural extension agent shall not have been elected secretary of such committee, he shall be ex officio a member of the county committee. The county agricultural agent shall not have the power to vote."

elected in 1961. The 1938 Act provided that "in any county in which there is only one local committee the local committee shall also be the county committee." At present there are 268 such one-community counties in which direct election takes place. The other 2,793 county committees are elected indirectly, by the convention method.

A State-by-State breakdown of the 268 one-community counties (See Appendix, Exhibit 1.) reveals that:

Alaska, Nevada, and Rhode Island have only one-community counties: 3, 17, and 5 respectively;
Florida has 52 one-community counties, and 13 multi-community counties;
Hawaii has 3 one-community counties and 1 multi-community county;
Arizona has 8 one-community counties and 6 multi-community counties;
California has 20 one-community counties, and 37 multi-community counties;
New Jersey has 7 one-community counties and 13 multi-community counties;
Colorado has 15 one-community counties and 40 multi-community counties;
Texas has 42 one-community counties and 212 multi-community counties; and
20 other States have 1 or more one-community counties.

The existing one-community counties vary widely in area and population, and there has been little, if any, criticism of their operations. It would seem, therefore, that one potential way to obtain direct election of more county committees would be to extend the number of one-community counties. The Secretary has the power under existing legislation to designate more counties as one-community counties. The drop in the farm population from 32,393,000 in 1933 to 14,803,000 in 1961, and the decrease in the number of farms from 6,740,750 in 1933 to 3,811,000 in 1961, would seem to justify a considerable reduction in the number of multi-community counties. However, this approach would result in direct election in only a portion of the counties. In those States and regions where the multi-community county system is needed and is firmly established the indirect election system would continue as at present.

C. Problems of Direct Election in Multi-Community Counties

A number of alternatives exist for setting up a system of direct election of county committees in multi-community counties. Any change to direct election would require making some choices among these alternatives. They concern such things as the electorate, nomination of candidates, and the method of election.

1. Timing of the election

One question that would need to be decided if direct election of county committees were to be proposed for multi-community counties would be whether to hold a separate election for county committees, or whether to elect them at the same time as community committees are elected. Obviously, a second election would be somewhat more costly. On the other hand, one of the nominating procedures that has been suggested (See the description of the 1957 and 1959 Humphrey bills in the Appendix, Exhibit 2.) would make use of the newly elected community chairmen as a nominating committee, and this specific method of nomination would not be possible if only one election were held.

2. Election at large versus election by districts

A change to a system of direct elections would raise the question of whether county committeemen should be chosen from the entire county by all the eligible farmers, or whether they should be chosen from election districts such as the present communities. The present system of indirect election is a combination in that committeemen are chosen at large, but the voting is weighted by districts since each community has one vote. Some

respondents to the questionnaire have indicated concern about the effects of election at large upon the representation of geographic areas or types of farming that are a minority in the county. Others have indicated a concern that part-time farmers in the more urbanized portion of a county are so numerous that they could outvote the full-time farmers in the more rural sections. (See Summary of Questionnaire Responses in the Appendix, Exhibit 11.)

On the other hand, selection of county committeemen by districts would introduce problems of fair apportionment and the possibilities of malapportionment. Present communities vary widely in number of farmers. Attempts to provide election districts with equal numbers of farmers would run counter to the idea that seems to underlie the present community system, namely that geographic and type-of-farming communities exist and should be separately represented.

An alternative method for two- or three-community counties has been suggested by the Hawaii ASC State Committee. This method would partially combine direct election with the present district system. (See Appendix, Exhibit 3.)

3. Eligibility to vote

At present, any farmer who participates, or is eligible to participate in an ASCS administered program is eligible to vote for community committeemen. The same system would probably be extended to eligibility to vote for county committeemen. It is difficult to imagine a farmer who is not eligible to vote under these rules. It would appear that it would be easier to describe eligibility if the present law were changed to simply state that all farmers are eligible to vote. This would also eliminate the infrequent discussions over the eligibility of individual farmers.

It should be recognized that the present eligibility rules extend the right to vote to both farmers who favor and farmers who oppose present farm programs. Presumably the electorate might be restricted to only those farmers who actually participate in current farm programs, but this has been rejected as undesirable in the past.

4. Nominating systems

Of the three methods of election presently used to select community committeemen, the use of polling places or of mail ballots would be possible methods for direct election of county committeemen. However, in multi-community counties with large numbers of farmers the other method, the election meeting, would probably not be feasible. If either the polling place or the mail ballot system were to be used, a nominating system would have to be provided. The present convention system of electing county committees does not require nominations prior to the convention.

Present regulations for the polling place and mail ballot methods for electing community committeemen are based on the idea that, to provide the voter with an adequate choice, two candidates per position is a desirable minimum. Therefore, where five positions are to be filled in the election, an attempt is made to have a minimum of ten candidates on the ballot. Presumably some such minimum would also be desirable in the case of direct election of county committeemen.

Present regulations also provide that voters may write-in the names of candidates not already on the ballot for community committeemen. Presumably this provision for free choice by the voter would also be desirable in the direct election of county committeemen. It should be noted, however, that this gives the voter the option to support a write-in campaign for a candidate who is opposed to present farm programs.

Several different methods of nominating candidates for direct election to county committees are possible. In the present system of election of community committeemen, a nominating petition signed by 10 eligible voters is sufficient to place a candidate's name on the ballot if he signifies a willingness to serve as committeeman. If nominating petitions are not filed for at least 10 candidates, the incumbent community committeemen are responsible for adding the names of enough additional candidates to provide the minimum of ten. The existing nominating system frequently does not function as it is supposed to, and the county office manager plays a key role in the preparation of the lists of candidates in many counties.

Some respondents to the questionnaire sent to county committee chairmen noted defects in the present system. For example, some of them indicated that it was quite a burdensome (and expensive) job for community committeemen to go out and find farmers willing to become candidates. A few respondents commented that candidates who went out and got petitions signed to place themselves on the ballot were not necessarily the best qualified candidates. One or two county chairmen noted that community chairmen were often reluctant to push themselves as candidates for re-election, and in this way competent committeemen often eliminated themselves from the ballot under the present system. (See Appendix, Exhibit 11, for summary of questionnaire responses.)

Another method of nomination would be to use a nominating committee, and considerable variety is possible here. One example is the proposal previously mentioned of converting the present electoral convention of community committee chairmen into a nominating convention, which would meet after the election of the community chairmen and nominate candidates for county committeemen to be placed on a ballot and voted on at an election held subsequent to the convention. A variation on this would be to use the incumbent community chairmen as a nominating convention or committee prior to the community election, and to hold the community and county elections at the same time.

Another alternative is a nominating committee composed of individuals not currently serving as community or county committeemen. The nominating committees used from 1954 to 1960 are one example of this type of committee, with membership selected from various USDA programs at the county level and from local farm organizations. Experience with these committees indicates that some administrative safeguards would be necessary to insure that the committee would actually function, because where none of the members are part of the ASCS administrative system there is no way of requiring that the committee actually meet and perform its function of nominating candidates. As a result, the burden of preparing the list of candidates may be thrust on the chairman of the nominating committee or some influential persons in the county.

A mixed nominating committee, composed partially of county and community committeemen and partly of other individuals is still another possibility. This kind of committee would avoid some of the disadvantages associated with either all-ASCS or no-ASCS committees, but might engender conflict between those favoring and those opposing the farm program established at the time.

Another possible alternative, frequently used in other local elections, is the filing of a written declaration of candidacy by any person wishing to become a candidate. An argument in favor of this is that it is simple and easy to administer. An argument against it is that it is sometimes necessary to persuade a potentially good candidate that he ought to run for office, and a system of individual filing does not provide for the drafting of candidates who are qualified or would improve the representativeness of the committee. However, this method might be combined with the petition method, which could be used to draft qualified candidates who did not file voluntarily. Another argument against individual filing is that it encourages frivolous candidates and burdens the voter with a multiplicity of candidates.

Still another alternative would be to have a nominating meeting of all interested farmers. In effect, the meeting would serve as a nominating committee. However, this method would be cumbersome in counties with any substantial number of farmers. Nominations by petition could be permitted in addition to nominations at the meeting.

5. Cost of direct elections

It is estimated that the cost of the present convention system for the average-sized county is $125. The cost of permitting all farmers to vote for county committeemen using a mail ballot is estimated to be $270 for the average-sized county. This estimate assumes that in each county there would be a nominating meeting comparable to the existing convention, augmented by nominations by petition and the provision for write-in on ballots. (See Appendix, Exhibit 4.) Based on this estimate, the total additional cost of direct elections by mail ballot for the approximately 2,800 counties now using indirect elections would be slightly more than $400,000.

D. Conclusions

Many of the problems of direct election of ASC county committees are the result of differing viewpoints about the purposes for which elections are to be held. Consideration of some of these viewpoints may cast light on the ways in which the problems might be resolved.

Basic to direct elections is the point of view that it is good to permit everyone to have a direct vote in selecting the persons who will make governmental decisions affecting the voter. Basic to indirect systems is the point of view that not all voters have the specialized knowledge about the job and the candidates that is essential to making the best possible choice, and therefore representatives who have this specialized knowledge can make a better choice than can all the voters.

Another conflict in viewpoint concerns the question of the extent to which a voter should have a choice of candidates. There is some potential inconsistency between permitting voting by farmers opposed to the current farm programs but only permitting them to vote for candidates in favor of the programs. On the one hand it seems reasonable to assume that once Congress has established a farm program in law, every official has a positive obligation to make it function as well as possible and to support it as long as it is a part of recognized public policy. On the other hand, if the voter is opposed to existing programs and wants them changed, another point of view is that he ought to have a choice between candidates who agree with him and those that do not. Especially if the farmer committee system is viewed as a channel of communication between farmers and the Department, it seems reasonable that the elected farmer committeemen ought to be permitted to represent all points of view, not just those favorable to the current program.

The provision of a place on the ballot for a write-in vote is also an example of differing viewpoints. In a democratic election, it is a normal precaution. It protects the voter against attempts to manipulate the nominating process to perpetuate certain persons in office. It also protects the right of any group of voters to vote for a candidate they want, even though he was not nominated and placed on the ballot. In practice, in the election of farmer committeemen the use of write-in spaces on the ballots also permits the election of committeemen who may be opposed to portions or all of the existing farm program. If only candidates who support the existing program are permitted to be nominated, to be strictly consistent the write-in ballot should not be permitted. But to ban the write-in ballot would be to lose an important safeguard against domination by a small group in the community. Sometimes a compromise between viewpoints is necessary to obtain the most desirable election system.

Open and free elections, held at stated intervals and with reasonable frequency, permit the individual to exercise a measure of control over the selection of public office holders. It is a tool which may be used irregularly; the contests may be rigged rather than real; the voters may not be given reasonable choice; the stakes presented to the voter at election time may be negligible, the election may appear to be without significance, and the public may demonstrate little interest in it. But it is also a tool which may be used effectively by the aroused populace - or when there is some lapse in performance; the public office holders may be exposed to considerable heat as they offer themselves and their records for periodic accounting; the election may be used more manifestly by the people to bring their influence to bear than any other technique; there may be a meaningful choice in the elections; the election may be a vital part of popular control rather than a hollow observance of routine procedures. In short, the tool is there, and its presence may serve a useful function.

PART II. OTHER PROBLEMS OF ASC ELECTIONS

Presented in this section of the paper are other problems related to the election of county and community committeemen. Most of them may be considered separately from the question of direct or indirect election of county committees. However, if any changes are made in the present system of ASC elections, consideration may be given to the problems discussed below.

A. Term of Office

At present 3 county committeemen and 2 alternates are elected annually for 1 year terms of office. While this provides for the maximum practical opportunity for farmers to replace committeemen whom they regard as unsatisfactory, it also, for the same reason, has some disadvantages. In the elections held in 1960, two members were changed on 329 county committees and in 82 counties all three members changed. In the 1961 elections, two members were changed on 257 county committees and in 60 counties all three members changed. One member was changed on 861 county committees in the 1960 elections and in 734 counties in the 1961 elections. (See Appendix, Exhibit 6.)

The programs administered thru committees are many, varied and complex in their provisions. To get a good understanding of both program principles and the amount of detail which an effective county committeeman needs requires time. Except in unusual cases, even farmers who have been actively participating in ASCS programs have difficulty in getting on top of their job as a county committeeman in the first year in office. Very few farmers make good county committeemen their first year in office. When all three or even two members of a committee are lost, a serious loss of experience occurs.

The loss of a majority of a committee can also result in undesirable changes in program and administrative policies or at least a significant period of indecision and vacillation. In addition, because the county office manager serves at the pleasure of the county committee, a change in the make-up of the committee may result in a change in managers. If a manager is ineffective, inefficient or uncooperative, he of course should be changed. However, to recruit and retain the most highly competent managers, reasonable protection against removal for purely arbitrary and capricious reasons must be provided. Since all other employees serve at the pleasure of the manager, any danger to his job security is a danger to theirs and may affect their performance.

The principal suggestion which has been made for improvement in this area is to elect one county committeeman each year for a three year term of office. Thus in the absence of a death, resignation, etc., there will always be two experienced persons on the committee. This would assure a reasonable degree of continuity of program policies to farmers and additional job security to the manager and staff because at least two county committeemen would be familiar with the manager's abilities and performance. This method might of course prolong the tenure of an unsatisfactory committeeman.

A majority of the county chairmen responding to the questionnaire favored a three-year term of office, with one member to be elected each year.

At present there is no limit to the number of successive terms of office to which a county committeeman may be elected. An alternative is to provide that a committeeman can not serve more than a specified number of successive terms of office.

Adoption of the alternative would bring fresh and perhaps different viewpoints to bear on the problems and policy decisions with which county committees are faced. It would also provide an "alumni" group which was well informed on programs and problems and which might assist considerably in getting a better understanding of these programs and problems by other farmers in county. It would also force "fresh blood" into committees which have become stagnated and entrenched.

On the other hand, such a plan would force the loss of experienced and valuable personnel from the committees. It would also place an additional limit on the freedom of choice which the farmers of a county have in selecting their committeemen. Most elective offices in the federal, State and local governments do not have restrictions on the number of terms of office a person may serve. This is also true of most boards of directors of commercial enterprises. In areas which have relatively few farmers who are willing to serve on committees, it would increase the difficulty of getting the services of well qualified persons.

B. Consolidation of County Committees and Offices

There is an increasing number of counties in the United States which have very few farms or ranches. For economy of operation and for effective administration, the offices for 201 such counties have been consolidated in 87 locations. (See Appendix, Exhibit 7.) While it is recognized that such factors as distances, natural barriers, the durability of local political boundaries, and size and scope of participation in ASCS programs make it impractical to prescribe a precise formula to govern consolidation, it would appear that more consolidations of offices might be considered.

Because of the small number of farmers in some of these counties, it is difficult to elect a three-man county committee in each of the counties as is currently required by law. It would appear that the Secretary could be given administrative discretion to provide for a county committee to serve more than one county provided the county has: (1) Fewer than 50 active farms; (2) the office has been consolidated with an adjoining county.

Consolidation would raise the question of whether there should be at least one member of the county committee from each county. This would not premit the inclusion of more than three counties in one consolidation under present regulations. However, the present statute requires counties to be used as units for many aspects of the farm programs, such as conservation cost-sharing and the setting of allotments and quotas. In these vital matters there might be strong feeling that each county should be represented on the committee if counties are consolidated.

C. Eligibility for Candidacy for ASC Committees

Current regulations contain a considerable list of conditions that will cause an individual farmer to be ineligible to hold office as a community committeeman or delegate or as a county committeeman. In addition to requirements that he must be a resident of the community or county and be eligible to vote in the community elections, there are three groups of regulations concerned respectively with (1) fraud and incompetence in holding public office or conviction of a felony, (2) restriction on dual office holding within the program, and (3) restrictions on partisan political activity.

The requirement with respect to fraud, removal for incompetence, and conviction of crime seems to be complete enough, and also provides for flexibility in that the Deputy

Administrator and in some cases the State committee can waive this disqualification under special circumstances.

The restrictions on dual office-holding seem to be adequate to prevent any serious conflict-of-interest between the job of committeeman and any other paid job in the Department of Agriculture. They do not prevent individuals from becoming candidates for community and county committees if the individual is willing to relinquish his other job if elected to the committee.

The restrictions on "political activity" are extensive, and may limit considerably the number of otherwise qualified individuals who can serve on farmer committees. No candidate for any elective county, State, or Federal office may hold office as a farmer committeeman within a year after being a candidate. Nor may any elected county, State, or Federal official become a farmer committeeman until he has been out of office one year. Since exclusively a Federal program is involved, it is not clear why a former State legislator or county commissioner need be barred from becoming a farmer committeeman immediately upon leaving office. The usual purpose of such prohibitions is to insure that a Government official does not benefit in a subsequent position from some official action of his in a previous office. Since State and county officials have no authority whatever over the program, the extent to which this purpose applies to farmer committeemen is not clear.

There are two primary arguments advanced for retaining the present restrictions on political activity. One is that it is necessary to protect farmers participating in the program from possible partisan political repercussions for their partisan activities outside the program. For example, if the farmer was a prominent leader in party X in a successful campaign to gain control of the county board, a defeated county board member of party Y might immediately become a county or community committeeman and use this position to penalize the farmer identified with party X. The second argument is that administration of the programs assigned to ASCS must be nonpartisan, hence a time barrier must be maintained between overt partisan activity and participation in local administration. A part of both arguments is the idea that farmer committeemen and the programs will be held in higher esteem if they are not identified with local partisan disputes.

An interesting aspect of the present regulations is that apparently an individual could be a city official, such as mayor or councilman, or a city employee, and still be a farmer committeeman if he owned a farm that was eligible for one of the programs. There would seem to be no good reason why this should not be the case.

Officials of other units of government such as drainage districts, soil conservation districts, irrigation districts, and school districts are eligible to be farmer committeemen. There might be more possibilities of exercising influence over some aspects of the ASCS programs at the local level on the part of some of these officials than would be true of State or county officials.

There is also a prohibition against any officer, employee, or delegate to a convention of any political party or political organization becoming a farmer committeeman within one year of such political activity. This would disqualify a farmer who served as a delegate from his precinct to the county convention of a political party, for example. The criticism directed at county and community committees that they do not attract the natural leaders of the farm community, may in part be caused by prohibitions such as this one which penalize farmers who are active in positions of leadership.

The arguments in favor of these requirements are the same as those mentioned above in support of the restrictions upon being a candidate for or holding elected county, State, or Federal office.

D. Farmer Participation in Elections of Community Committees

A frequent criticism of the farmer committees is that they are chosen by a handful of voters because there is such low participation in elections. Participation in the 1961 elections shows a considerable variation among the States.

The statistics reported for elections of community committees must be viewed with caution. For example, inquiry in one State about the reason for an increase of several thousand in the number of eligible voters between 1960 and 1961 brought the response that, after checking with the counties reporting increases, about 40 percent of the reported increase was due to various errors in compiling the statistics.

However, the percentages of voter turnout show such considerable variations that some conclusions may be drawn even though the reported figures may not be precisely accurate. The major variations appear to be connected with the system of election used, with the section of the country, and with the number of voters.

In the 1961 elections, participation was much lower in those States using the meeting for selecting community committeemen. (See Appendix, Exhibit 8.) For the 12 States that used this method in over 90 percent of their counties, the median percentage of eligible farmers voting was 9 percent. In contrast, for those States using the mail ballot the median turnout was 32 percent, and for those using polling places, 30 percent. No State using meetings had over 13.3 percent voter turnout, while no State using one of the other two systems had less than 22.1 percent turnout.

When the farmer participation in the 1961 elections is analyzed by State and area, some sectional differences appear. (See Appendix, Exhibit 9.) The States in the Midwestern areas had the smallest voter turnout, while the highest turnouts were in the Southeast area and the Northeast area.

Six of the eight States in the Midwest area used the meeting system of elections. In addition, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Nebraska also used the meeting system and had very low voter participation.

The high turnout in the Northeast area probably results from a combination of factors. Among them are the historical development of the programs and the committee system in that area, the use of the mail ballot or polling place system of elections, and the relatively lower number of farmers in these States.

For the United States, 5 of the 8 States that had over 40 percent voter turnout also had less than 5,000 eligible voters, so there appears to be a connection between high participation and a relatively small number of farmers. All of the New England States had less than 5,000 eligible voters, and the lowest voter turnout was 31.8 percent in Vermont, so that all of the New England States were above the median percentage for the States not using the meeting system of elections.

The high turnout in the Southeast appears to have been due to a concerted effort of the Southeast area of ASCS and the States to increase voter participation. In 1961 in the nine-State area, over 182,000 more farmers voted than had done so in 1960, a percentage increase of 64 percent. The number of farmers voting doubled in four of the States. Southeast area and State officials followed up the elections with an attempt to educate the elected committeemen to their responsibilities and duties.

The specific actions taken at the State and county level to build up interest and get farmers to vote were:

1. In the mail ballot election, a checklist was maintained as envelopes were returned. Follow-up reminder cards were sent to farmers who had not voted.

2. Community committeemen were requested to remind farmers to mail their ballots. This was done in everyday contacts at stores, churches, and other places.

3. News media were used on a continuing basis. Many local radio stations carried spot announcements as a public service. Advertisements were sponsored in many local papers by cooperatives, businessmen, bankers, and farm organizations.

4. Cooperation was received from the Extension Service, SCS, FHA, FCIC, vocational agricultural teachers, State departments of agriculture, and farm organizations in encouraging farmers to vote.

The low voter participation in elections where the meeting system is used is very striking when community election returns within a county are examined. In McHenry County Illinois, the percentages of participation in the 1962 elections varied from 1 percent in Greenwood township to 12.6 percent in Riley township. The participation for the entire county was 4 percent. Assuming that the regular 5 offices were filled in the election, the number of candidates exceeded the number of voters in 8 of the 16 townships. (See Appendix, Exhibit 10.)

The election statistics indicate that there is some substance to the criticism that farmer committees are chosen by a handful of voters, at least in some of the States. However, low voter turnout can also indicate satisfaction with the work of the incumbents. Some improvement in voter participation would be desirable because the prestige of a farmer committee in the local community is to some extent associated with the amount of support it receives in the election. On the other hand, attempts to increase voter turnout should be related to the idea that if farmers believe the committees are doing an <u>important</u> job, they will want to participate in choosing the committee members. Therefore, any action that makes the work of the committees more important, or informs more farmers of the importance of this work, should contribute to increased participation in the elections.

EXHIBIT 1

NUMBER OF ONE COMMUNITY COUNTIES IN EACH STATE

STATE	NUMBER	STATE	NUMBER
Alabama	0	Montana	10
Alaska	3	Nebraska	6
Arizona	8	Nevada	17
Arkansas	0	New Hampshire	0
California	20	New Jersey	7
Colorado	15	New Mexico	3
Connecticut	0	New York	8
Delaware	1	North Carolina	2
Florida	52	North Dakota	0
Georgia	19	Ohio	0
Hawaii	3	Oklahoma	0
Idaho	4	Oregon	0
Illinois	0	Pennsylvania	4
Indiana	0	Rhode Island	5
Iowa	0	South Carolina	0
Kansas	0	South Dakota	0
Kentucky	0	Tennessee	0
Louisiana	4	Texas	42
Maine	2	Utah	6
Maryland	0	Vermont	0
Massachusetts	3	Virginia	3
Michigan	4	Washington	3
Minnesota	3	West Virginia	8
Mississippi	0	Wisconsin	1
Missouri	0	Wyoming	2
		U.S. TOTAL	268

EXHIBIT 2

SUMMARY OF THE 1957 AND 1959 HUMPHREY BILLS

In 1957, Senator Humphrey and eight co-sponsors introduced a bill providing for direct election of ASC county committees. The bill envisaged the nomination of community committeemen in open meeting from the floor and election by secret ballot at such community meetings. It provided for chairmen of each community committee (or vice-chairmen in their absence) to gather in county nominating conventions, to nominate farmers for each position to be filled on the county committee, including alternates, with provision for write-in of additional candidates in the election to follow by secret ballot. The bill provided for all farmers being eligible to vote. The direct election of the county committee was to be conducted either by mail or at public polling places. The 1959 version of Senator Humphrey's bill also provided for 3-year, staggered terms of county committeemen, with one man elected each year and with no limitation upon the number of terms a man might serve.

The bill envisaged further that chairmen of county committees would select one member of the ASC State committee, to serve with two others to be named by the Secretary of Agriculture, one of which would be named by the Secretary as chairman. This provision was modified in the 1959 version of Senator Humphrey's bill. All county committeemen were to elect a slate of farmers from whom the Secretary would select the nominees to serve on the State committee with those members who have been appointed directly by the Secretary.

EXHIBIT 3

HAWAII PROPOSAL

The following proposal was developed by the Hawaii State ASC Committee following a study of their 3 one-community counties and their one multi-community county:

In a county of only 2 or 3 communities direct farmer election of the county committee may be effected but only in the following prescribed manner:

(1) Farmer-elected Chairmen of the respective community committees will become automatically members of the county committee - the member with the highest "vote ratio" (votes received by the individual divided by total votes cast in the respective community) becoming chairman and next highest, vice chairman.

(2) Farmer-elected community committee vice-chairman in a county of only 2 communities will become automatically member and 1st alternate of the county committee according to respective "vote ratios"; 2nd alternate position to be filled by the remaining community committee member with the highest "vote ratio."

(3) In a county of 3 communities the farmer-elected community committee vice-chairman with highest "vote ratio" will become automatically 1st alternate, and community committee vice-chairman with next highest "vote ratio", 2nd alternate.

According to ASCS, present legislation does not allow the granting to a State of permission to use this system.

EXHIBIT 4

ESTIMATED COST COMPARISON OF ASC COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTION METHODS.

"X" County - Assumptions: 1,000 eligible voters in county. 10 communities in county. 100 counties in State.

	Community Committee Chairmen as Delegates to Convention		All Community Committeemen as Delegates to Convention		Election by All Farmers Using Mailed Ballots	
Public Notice of Convention	$	10.00	$	10.00	$	
Convention						
3 County Committeemen (1/2 day)	24.00		24.00			
Convention Delegates (1/2 day)	65.00		195.00			
Mileage for Delegates	16.00		50.00			
		105.00		269.00		
Notification of Newly Elected Committeemen		5.00		5.00		5.00
County Report of Election		5.00		5.00		5.00
Public Notice of Right to Nominate by Petition						10.00
Securing Slate of Nominees						
10 Community Committee Chairmen (1/2 day)					65.00	
Mileage for Committeemen					10.00	
						75.00
Receiving Nominating Petitions						10.00
Public Notice of Mail Election						10.00
Ballots for 1,000 Eligible Voters						
Preparation and Instruction Letter					25.00	
Mailing (includes postage)					55.00	
						80.00
Cost of Handling Returned Ballots						
Safekeeping					10.00	
Unclaimed Ballots Returned by Post Office					25.00	
Postage (50% return)					15.00	
						50.00

EXHIBIT 4--Continued

ESTIMATED COST COMPARISON OF ASC COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTION METHODS.

"X" County - Assumptions: 1,000 eligible voters in county. 10 communities in county. 100 counties in State.

	Community Committee Chairmen as Delegates to Convention		All Community Committeemen as Delegates to Convention		Election by All Farmers Using Mailed Ballots	
Tabulation of Ballots 3 Committeemen (1/2 day)						24.00
TOTAL EXPENSES		125.00		289.00		$269.00

EXHIBIT 5

ESTIMATED COST COMPARISON OF ASC COMMUNITY COMMITTEE ELECTION METHODS

"X" County - Assumptions: 1,000 eligible voters in county. 10 communities in county. 100 counties in State.

	Meeting Election		Mail Election		Polling Places	
Community Boundary Changes						
Notice from State office	$ .50		$ .50		$ .50	
Reply by county office	10.00		10.00		10.00	
State committee action on changes	.50		.50		.50	
		$ 11.00		$ 11.00		$ 11.00
Public Notice of Community Boundaries		10.00		10.00		10.00
Public Notice of Right to Nominate by Petition		--		10.00		10.00
Training Community Committee Chairmen (10 communities)						
10 Chairmen (1/2 day)	65.00		65.00		65.00	
Mileage for committeemen	16.00		16.00		16.00	
3 County committeemen	24.00		24.00		24.00	
County office manager	10.00		10.00		10.00	
State office cost of duplicating instructions	1.00		1.00		1.00	
		116.00		116.00		116.00
Public Notice of Election		10.00		20.00		20.00
Securing Slate of Nominees						
10 Community Committeemen (1 day each)	--		130.00		130.00	
Mileage for committeemen	--		16.00		16.00	
		--		146.00		146.00
Receiving Nominating Petitions		--		10.00		10.00
Ballots for 1,000 eligible voters						
Preparation (including checking for eligibility)		--	50.00			50.00
Mailing (includes postage)		--	55.00			--
				105.00		
Cost of Handling Returned Ballots						
Sorting and safekeeping		--	20.00		--	
Unclaimed ballots returned by Post Office		--	25.00		--	
Postage (35% return)	--		10.50		--	--
				55.50		

EXHIBIT 5--Continued

ESTIMATED COST COMPARISON OF ASC COMMUNITY COMMITTEE ELECTION METHODS

"X" County - Assumptions: 1,000 eligible voters in county. 10 communities in county. 100 counties in State.

	Meeting Election		Mail Election		Polling Places	
Election Meetings						
30 community committeemen (1/2 day)	195.00		--		--	
10 community committeemen to deliver ballots (1/2 day)	65.00		--		--	
Mileage to deliver ballots	16.00		--		--	
		276.00		--		--
Conduct of Polling Place						
30 community committeemen (1 day each)	--		--		390.00	
Mileage for committeemen	---		--		50.00	
10 community committeemen to deliver ballots (1/2 day)	--		--		65.00	
Mileage to deliver ballots	--		--		16.00	
		--		--		521.00
Tabulation of Ballots						
3 county committeemen (1 day)	--		48.00		48.00	
Completion of community election reports	--		10.00		10.00	
		--		58.00		58.00
Notification of newly elected committeemen		10.00		10.00		10.00
County Office Reports of Elections		10.00		10.00		10.00
Handling Election Complaints (1 case)		10.00		10.00		10.00
TOTAL EXPENSE		$ 453.00		$ 571.50		$ 982.00

FORM ASCS-26
(3-10-61)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AGRICULTURAL STABILIZATION AND CONSERVATION SERVICE

EXHIBIT 6

Changes in County Committee Composition as a Result of ASCS Elections in 1960 and 1961, and Changes in County Office Managers 1959-July 1, 1962

STATE	NUMBER OF COUNTY COMMITTEES	CHANGES AS A RESULT OF 1960 ELECTIONS								New Manager 1959 - 60		CHANGES AS A RESULT OF 1961 ELECTIONS								New Manager 1960 - 61		Number of New Managers Since 1961 Elections
		New Chairmen		1 New Member		2 New Members		3 New Members				New Chairmen		1 New Member		2 New Members		3 New Members				
		No. of Counties	% of Counties	No. of Counties	% of Counties	No. of Counties	% of Counties	No. of Counties	% of Counties	No.	%	No. of Counties	% of Counties	No. of Counties	% of Counties	No. of Counties	% of Counties	No. of Counties	% of Counties	No.	%	
Connecticut	8	2	25.0	3	37.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	12.5	1	12.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Delaware	3	0	0	1	33.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Maine	16	7	43.8	5	31.3	2	12.5	0	0	0	0	2	12.5	4	25.0	1	6.3	0	0	0	0	0
Maryland	23	8	34.8	7	30.4	5	21.7	0	0	0	0	4	17.4	6	26.1	0	0	0	0	1	4.3	1
Massachusetts	13	4	30.8	4	30.8	3	23.1	0	0	1	7.7	1	7.7	1	7.7	0	0	0	0	1	7.7	1
New Hampshire	10	2	20.0	4	40.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	20.0	0	0	2	20.0	1	10.0	1	10.0	0
New Jersey	20	8	40.0	8	40.0	4	20.0	0	0	4	20.0	8	40.0	5	25.0	1	5.0	0	0	0	0	0
New York	58	12	20.3	30	50.8	9	15.5	1	1.7	2	3.4	11	19.0	19	31.0	4	6.9	1	1.7	1	1.7	3
Pennsylvania	67	20	29.9	29	43.3	6	9.0	0	0	5	7.5	16	23.9	23	34.2	4	6.0	0	0	3	4.5	2
Rhode Island	5	3	60.0	1	20.0	1	20.0	1	20.0	1	20.0	2	40.0	2	40.0	0	0	2	40.0	2	40.0	0
Vermont	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Virginia	99	12	12.1	16	16.2	4	4.0	1	1.0	1	1.0	5	5.1	7	7.1	4	4.0	0	0	5	5.1	2
West Virginia	55	18	32.7	10	18.2	7	12.7	5	9.1	2	3.6	12	21.8	7	12.7	3	5.5	1	1.8	0	0	3
Northeast Area	391	96	24.5	118	30.2	41	10.5	8	2.0	16	4.1	64	16.4	75	19.2	19	4.9	5	1.3	14	3.6	13
Alabama	67	12	17.9	13	19.4	6	9.0	0	0	2	3.0	5	7.5	10	14.9	2	3.0	0	0	2	3.0	1
Arkansas	75	21	28.0	18	24.0	8	10.7	5	6.7	9	12.0	14	18.7	18	24.0	5	6.7	0	0	4	5.3	4
Florida	65	32	49.2	29	44.6	11	16.4	1	1.5	11	16.4	25	38.5	29	44.6	4	6.2	3	4.6	6	9.2	7
Georgia	159	37	23.3	44	27.7	26	16.4	11	6.8	14	8.8	22	13.8	40	25.2	8	5.0	3	1.9	2	1.3	6
Louisiana	64	11	17.2	8	12.5	7	10.9	4	6.3	10	15.6	9	14.1	14	21.9	2	3.1	4	6.3	5	7.8	2
Mississippi	82	13	15.9	18	22.0	13	15.9	2	2.4	9	11.0	9	11.0	17	20.7	6	7.3	0	0	0	0	3
North Carolina	100	28	28.0	18	18.0	3	3.0	2	2.0	6	6.0	16	16.0	20	20.0	1	1.0	1	1.0	15	15.0	9
South Carolina	46	7	15.2	14	30.4	5	10.9	0	0	3	6.5	4	8.7	9	19.6	2	4.3	0	0	0	0	1
Tennessee	95	18	18.9	8	8.4	2	2.1	0	0	11	11.6	9	9.5	7	7.4	1	1.1	0	0	6	6.3	7
Southeast Area	753	179	23.8	170	22.6	81	10.6	25	3.3	75	10.0	113	15.0	164	21.8	31	4.1	11	1.5	40	5.3	40
Illinois	102	23	22.5	36	35.3	5	4.9	0	0	11	10.8	26	25.5	22	21.6	7	6.9	1	1.0	3	2.9	12
Indiana	92	20	21.7	41	44.6	10	10.9	2	2.2	10	10.9	25	27.2	38	41.3	15	16.3	1	1.1	2	2.2	9
Iowa	100	25	25.0	37	37.0	9	9.0	1	1.0	19	19.0	31	31.0	35	35.0	14	14.0	2	2.0	12	12.0	12
Kentucky	120	36	30.0	28	23.3	9	7.5	6	5.0	5	4.2	33	27.5	25	20.8	7	5.8	7	5.8	3	2.9	8
Michigan	83	18	21.7	27	32.5	6	7.2	1	1.2	14	16.9	15	18.1	20	24.1	6	7.2	0	0	7	8.4	4
Missouri	114	34	29.8	27	23.7	7	6.1	0	0	7	6.1	46	40.4	30	26.3	15	13.2	6	5.3	24	21.1	34
Ohio	88	18	20.5	8	9.1	0	0	6	6.8	16	18.2	16	18.2	16	18.2	4	4.5	0	0	8	9.1	8
Wisconsin	72	12	16.7	17	23.6	1	1.4	1	1.4	10	13.9	9	12.5	9	12.5	2	2.8	0	0	3	4.2	6
Midwest	771	186	24.1	221	28.7	47	6.1	17	2.2	92	11.9	201	26.1	195	25.3	70	9.1	17	2.2	62	8.0	93
Arizona	14	9	64.3	7	50.0	4	28.6	1	7.1	1	7.1	5	35.7	8	57.1	1	7.1	0	0	1	7.1	0
California	57	24	42.1	25	43.9	12	21.1	1	1.8	10	17.5	17	30.0	18	31.6	17	30.0	0	0	3	5.3	3
Colorado	55	18	32.7	18	32.7	7	12.7	3	5.5	7	12.7	14	25.5	17	30.9	6	10.9	0	0	1	1.8	6
Hawaii	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kansas	105	37	35.2	34	32.4	16	15.2	3	2.9	6	5.7	19	18.1	26	24.8	17	16.2	3	2.9	5	4.8	12
Nevada	17	12	70.6	10	58.8	3	17.6	0	0	0	0	9	52.9	8	47.1	3	17.6	1	5.9	4	23.5	2
New Mexico	31	6	19.4	10	32.3	3	9.7	1	3.2	3	9.7	6	19.4	11	35.5	1	3.2	0	0	0	0	4
Oklahoma	77	17	22.1	20	26.0	7	9.1	2	2.6	3	3.9	15	19.5	18	23.4	4	5.2	1	1.3	3	3.9	2
Texas	254	166	65.4	62	24.4	27	10.3	10	3.9	4	1.6	51	20.1	54	21.3	22	8.7	8	3.1	15	5.9	29
Utah	29	8	27.6	8	27.6	4	13.8	2	6.9	4	13.8	3	10.3	9	31.0	3	10.3	0	0	1	3.4	1
Southwest Area	643	297	46.2	194	30.2	83	12.9	23	3.6	38	5.9	139	21.6	169	26.3	74	11.5	13	2.0	33	5.1	59
Alaska	3	2	66.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	66.7	1	33.3	1	33.3	0	0	1	33.3	2
Idaho	43	20	46.5	10	23.3	7	16.3	5	11.6	4	9.3	12	27.9	11	25.6	3	7.0	1	2.3	2	4.7	1
Minnesota	90	20	22.2	30	33.3	13	14.4	1	1.1	5	5.6	17	19.9	21	23.3	15	16.7	1	1.1	3	3.3	4
Montana	56	16	28.6	20	35.7	10	17.9	1	1.8	1	1.8	19	33.9	18	32.1	7	12.5	2	3.6	2	3.6	0
Nebraska	93	28	30.1	39	41.9	20	21.5	1	1.1	2	2.2	14	15.1	30	32.3	12	12.9	1	1.1	2	2.2	3
North Dakota	53	17	32.1	14	26.4	6	11.3	0	0	4	7.5	16	30.2	12	22.6	11	20.8	4	7.5	1	1.9	1
Oregon	36	6	16.7	9	25.0	6	16.7	0	0	1	2.8	5	13.9	10	27.8	1	2.8	1	2.8	0	0	1
South Dakota	67	17	25.4	18	26.9	12	17.9	0	0	2	3.0	22	32.8	17	25.4	13	19.4	2	3.0	0	0	5
Washington	39	12	30.8	9	23.1	1	2.6	1	2.6	9	23.1	8	20.5	7	17.9	0	0	1	2.6	4	10.3	1
Wyoming	23	6	26.1	9	39.1	2	8.7	0	0	2	8.7	6	26.1	4	22.2	0	0	1	4.3	1	4.3	0
Northwest Area	503	144	28.6	158	31.4	77	15.3	9	1.8	30	6.0	121	24.1	131	26.0	63	12.5	14	2.8	16	3.2	18
Total All Areas	3,061	902	29.5	861	28.1	329	10.7	82	2.8	251	8.2	638	20.8	734	24.0	257	8.4	60	2.0	165	5.4	223

ASCS-OAS 7-26-62

EXHIBIT 7

INFORMATION ON ASC COMMITTEES AND OFFICES

STATE	Salary of County Committeemen	Salary of Community Committeemen	No. of County Committees	No. of Community Committees	No. of County Offices	No. of County Suboffices	No. of Consolidated Offices	No. of Counties Consolidated
Conneticut	12.00	12.00	8	53	8			
Delaware	15.00	12.00	3	19	3			
Maine	15.00	12.00	16	94	14	2	2	4
Maryland	14.00	9.00	23	208	23			
Massachusetts	15.00	13.50	13	81	10		1	4
New Hampshire	16.00	14.00	10	55	10			
New Jersey	12.00	12.00	20	71	11		5	14
New York	15.00	12.00	58	593	52		5	11
Pennsylvania	16.00	14.00	67	565	62		5	10
Rhode Island	16.00	--	5	--	3		2	4
Vermont	14.50	12.00	14	157	14			
Virginia	15.00	13.00	99	430	94		3	8
West Virginia	14.00	10.00	55	242	50		5	10
Northeast Area					354	2	28	65
Alabama	14.00	10.00	67	651	67			
Arkansas	14.00	11.00	75	905	75	2		
Florida	14.00	12.00	65	44	58	2	5	12
Georgia	15.00	11.00	159	763	159	1		
Louisiana	13.50	11.00	64	402	61		1	4
Mississippi	14.00	8.00	82	1,042	82	1		
North Carolina	15.00	13.00	100	1,143	99		1	2
~~Puerto Rico~~								
South Carolina	15.00	12.00	46	413	46			
Tennessee	15.00	11.00	95	1,254	95			
Southeast Area					742	6	7	18
Illinois	16.00	13.00	102	1,483	100	1	2	4
Indiana	16.00	12.00	92	974	92			
Iowa	16.00	13.00	100	1,601	100			
Kentucky	15.00	12.00	120	740	120			
Michigan	16.00	14.00	83	890	78		6 1/	11
Missouri	16.00	12.00	114	1,211	114			
Ohio	16.00	14.00	88	1,209	87		1	2
Wisconsin	15.00	14.00	72	1,105	65		4	11
Midwest					756	1	13	28
Arizona	15.00	13.00	14	29	13		1	2
California	16.00	14.00	57	213	47		6	16
Colorado	16.00	14.00	55	192	52	3	3	6
Hawaii	16.00	14.00	4	3	4			
Kansas	15.00	14.00	105	924	105			
Nevada	16.00	--	17	17	12		4	9
New Mexico	16.00	14.00	31	109	31			
Oklahoma	15.00	12.00	77	665	77			
Texas	15.00	13.00	254	1,350	246		8	16
Utah	16.00	14.00	29	129	27	1	2	4
Southwest Area					615	4	24	53
Alaska	26.00 2/	--	3	--				
Idaho	16.00	14.00	43	181	42		1	2
Minnesota	16.00	14.00	90	1,367	87		2	5
Montana	16.00	14.00	56	308	52		3	7
Nebraska	16.00	14.00	93	1,214	84		4	13
North Dakota	16.00	14.00	53	385	53			
Oregon	16.00	14.00	36	216	36			
South Dakota	16.00	14.00	67	530	64		3	6
Washington	16.00	14.00	39	297	37	1	2	4
Wyoming	16.00	14.00	23	140	23	1		
Northwest Area					478	2	15	37
Total States	15.20 Av.	12.69 Av.	3,061	26,667	2,945	15	87	201

ASCS:DASCO
2-9-62

1/ West half of Mackinac County combined with Luce County, and East half combined with Chippewa County.
2/ Not included in national average.

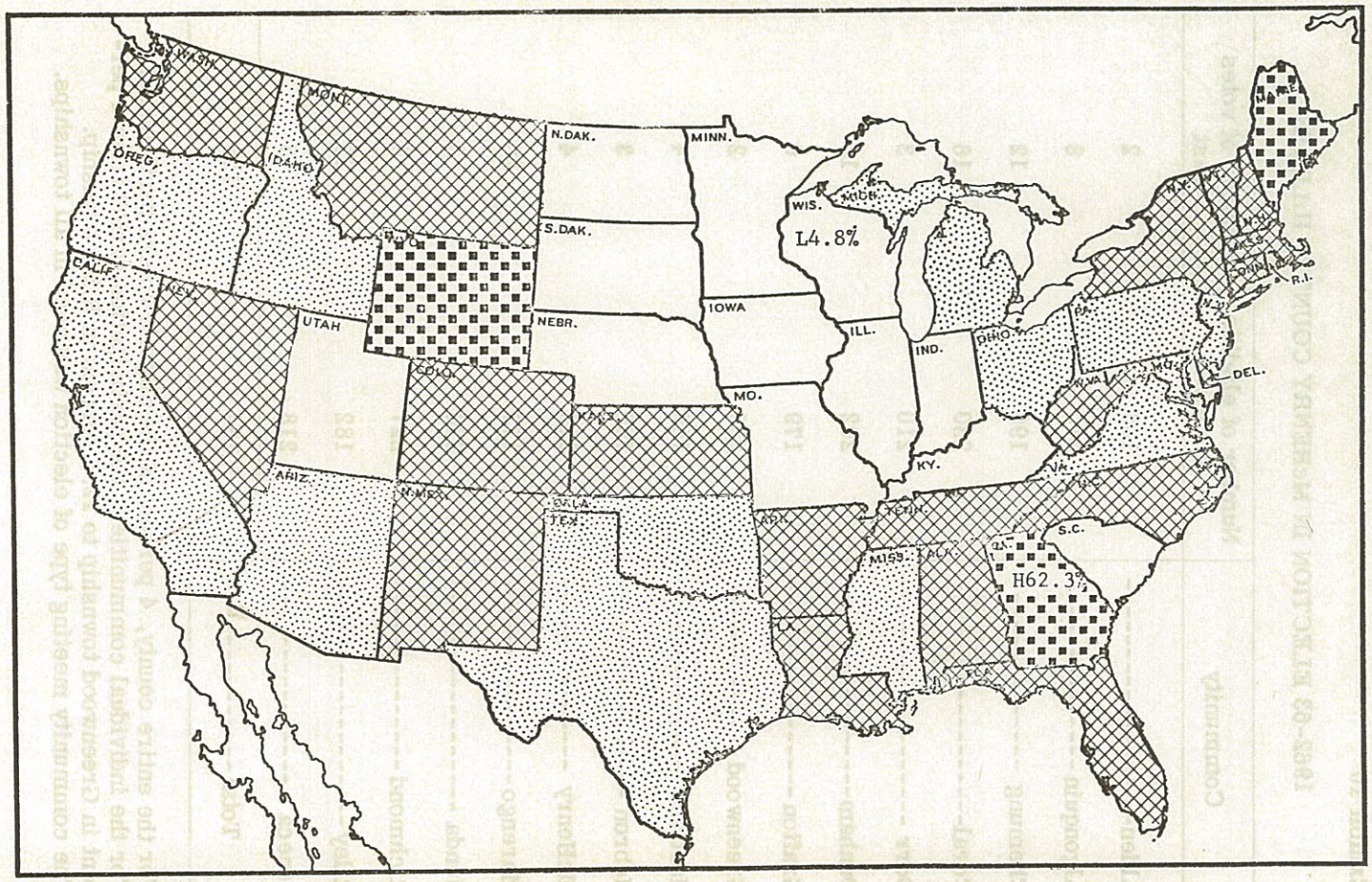
EXHIBIT 8

ASC COMMUNITY COMMITTEE ELECTIONS HELD IN 1961

No. County Committees		Eligible Voters	Farmers Voting	Percentage	No. of Counties Using:		
					Meeting	Mail	Polling Place
Alabama	67	162,992	55,651	34.1		67	
Alaska	3	1,000	244	24.4		3	
Arizona	14	14,675	3,684	25.1	3	11	
Arkansas	75	133,030	42,021	31.6		75	
California	57	90,181	22,856	25.3	1	56	
Colorado	55	47,030	15,501	33.0		55	
Connecticut	8	5,605	1,842	32.9		8	
Delaware	3	6,912	2,356	34.1		3	
Florida	65	42,575	14,898	35.0		65	
Georgia	159	131,936	82,364	62.3		159	
Hawaii	4	4,211	1,313	31.2		4	
Idaho	43	68,848	18,039	26.2		43	
Illinois	102	300,356	16,481	5.5	99		3
Indiana	92	225,187	15,879	7.1	90		2
Iowa	100	270,949	18,475	6.8	92		8
Kansas	105	206,561	66,090	32.6	4	101	
Kentucky	120	209,156	27,909	13.3	119		1
Louisiana	64	130,886	54,314	41.5	4	59	1
Maine	16	10,382	4,823	46.5		16	
Maryland	23	33,257	7,941	23.9		23	
Massachusetts	13	5,777	2,387	41.3	4	9	
Michigan	83	184,814	50,623	27.4	2	81	
Minnesota	90	208,683	21,055	10.1	84	5	1
Mississippi	82	151,042	42,424	28.1			82
Missouri	114	297,603	34,012	11.4	113		1
Montana	56	41,159	17,295	42.0		56	
Nebraska	93	152,131	12,285	8.1	88		5
Nevada	17	3,712	1,604	43.1		17	
New Hampshire	10	3,035	1,323	43.6		9	1
New Jersey	20	12,556	3,538	28.2		20	
New Mexico	31	24,312	8,501	35.0		31	
New York	58	91,229	28,056	30.8	19	39	
North Carolina	100	266,519	88,435	33.2	1		99
North Dakota	53	93,036	12,150	13.1	52	1	
Ohio	88	238,719	65,930	27.6	1	87	
Oklahoma	77	134,016	36,846	27.5		77	
Oregon	36	39,206	11,456	29.2		36	
Pennsylvania	67	123,233	27,192	22.1		67	
Rhode Island	5	1,117	380	34.0		5	
South Carolina	46	96,963	9,681	10.0	46		
South Dakota	67	81,455	9,263	11.4	65		2
Tennessee	95	234,996	80,681	34.3		95	
Texas	254	530,716	136,476	25.7		249	5
Utah	29	21,848	1,519	7.0	29		
Vermont	14	9,050	2,879	31.8	7	6	1
Virginia	99	120,486	26,586	22.1		75	24
Washington	39	86,821	26,181	30.2		39	
West Virginia	55	42,989	13,134	30.6		55	
Wisconsin	72	187,117	8,986	4.8	70		2
Wyoming	23	10,572	4,766	45.1		23	
ASCS-DASCO							
2-9-62							
TOTAL	3,061	5,590,641	1,258,325	22.5	993	1,830	238

EXHIBIT 9

ASC COMMUNITY COMMITTEE ELECTIONS, 1961



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Legend: Percentage of Eligible Farmers Voting — Below 15% (12 States); 15-30% (14 States); 30-45% (21 States); 45-65% (3 States)

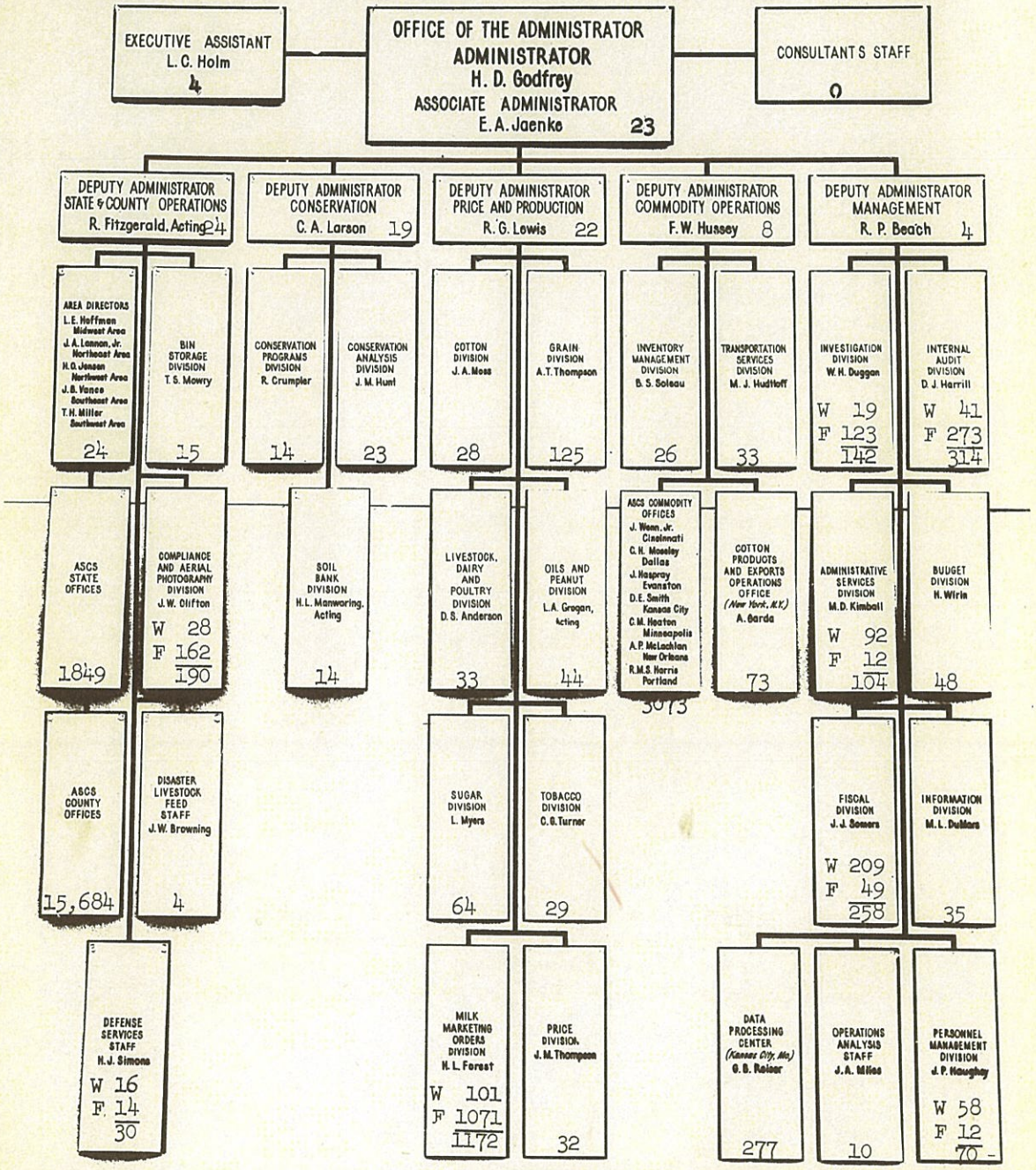
Exhibit 10

1962-63 ELECTION IN McHENRY COUNTY, ILLINOIS

Community	Number of eligible voters	Number of votes cast
Alden	188	2
Algonquin	210	8
Chemung	196	12
Coral	230	16
Dorr	210	3
Dunham	202	13
Grafton	179	6
Greenwood	200	2
Hartland	165	4
Hebron	160	3
McHenry	218	4
Marengo	173	20
Nunda	226	3
Richmond	227	4
Riley	182	23
Seneca	218	5
Total	3,184	128

For the entire county, 4 percent of the eligible voters participated. For the individual communities, the participation varied from 1 percent in Greenwood township to 12.6 percent in Riley township. The community meeting type of election was used in all townships.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service



W - Washington
F - Field

PREPARED BY UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE JUNE 4, 1962

Full-time Employment 4/30/62