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PREFACE

Rural America is changing. Communities that were once largely agricultural are now a blend of farm and non-farm people and enterprises. Each year there are fewer farms and farmers and more of the farms have become part-time farming units. The problems of our rural communities are now much broader than just the problems of agriculture and farm people.

Also, as rural areas become more complex the need for forward-looking plans in our communities is growing. To implement such planning and forward thinking, the data requirements relating to agriculture and other rural resources are more and more needed for subdivisions of the state and the counties. While this trend has been apparent for a long time, it has become more obvious in the last few years.

For many items local data have been more difficult to obtain than totals for the state and the nation. The collection of material by the Census and other agencies has, for over a century, brought together much information from towns and counties, but a great deal of it was never summarized or published for the small subdivisions so as to be available for use by the people in these local units. Details of the local resources for small areas have been lacking because it was easier to put the data together and offer them for important national, or possible state totals, then for the numerous smaller areas.

In Wisconsin the growing demand for local data was recognized years ago. It crystallized partly through the requirements of the agricultural extension workers in the counties, through teachers who try to deal with local issues in schools, and through others who were concerned with local or community projects. In this state there is a long history of trying to meet these requirements, but at first progress was slow because resources for the purpose were small.

With important new programs now underway, agricultural extension work is given greater responsibility of leadership in the development of our rural communities. All of the local knowledge that we can bring together is needed in the conscious endeavor toward making the most of the resources and opportunities in each community. The idea of group effort to a common purpose is old, but we are now faced with new challenges to make the best of our opportunities. We come to realize more and more that the sum of what is best for each of the communities is also best for the state and the nation. Perhaps some of our national problems can be best solved by working them out locally for each community. It is with the hope of assisting local people in all of our communities to more fully study their own economy and plan for a greater future that this series of publications on the rural resources of each Wisconsin county is undertaken.

This is the fourth series of these Wisconsin county publications which is made possible by the cooperation of several agencies. The Crop Reporting Office of the Wisconsin and United States Departments of Agriculture has the formal responsibility for preparing the county books. The United States Department of Agriculture through the Marketing Act of 1946 has made important contributions. Staff members of the College of Agriculture and the Extension Service have supplied specific parts. A committee of county agents has made important suggestions for improvement and in each county the county agents' office officially distributes the books. The State and County Historical Societies have also contributed to the project. Special credit for the work goes to workers in the Crop Reporting Office, particularly C. D. Capraoon, N. L. Brereton, Angela Krause, Harry Spray, and others.

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Agricultural Statistician