Returns for $1.00 Expense

A farmer can realize a profit for his work only when he can keep his total expenses lower than his total income. On the average, these 21 Barron County farmers showed a return of $1.23 for every dollar of costs, including interest. The ratio of receipts to expenses for the whole farm and for the more important farm enterprises are shown in Table 7. The profitable enterprises for the year of this study were the milk herd, oats, barley, and mixed hay. The enterprises conducted at a loss were hogs, poultry, and corn silage. The poor showing for corn silage was probably due to the poor yields obtained on several of the farms because of a very unfavorable growing season for corn.

Utilization of Man Labor

The expense for hired labor varied from nothing to $1136 per farm. The average expense was $210, or 8 percent of the total cash expenses. If the labor of the farm operator and his family is considered, however, the labor cost will amount to over one-third of the total farm cost.

How to use this labor to the best advantage in the production of crops and livestock is an important problem for the farm operator. Some farmers economize in the labor required to care for livestock by a convenient barn arrangement, and by the use of modern equipment such as milking machines, drinking cups, and manure carriers. Time required to care for crops is decreased on many farms by the use of tractors, or the use of four-horse teams and larger equipment.

The variations in the time required to care for livestock and crops on these Barron County farms were considerable. The hours of man labor per year required to care for livestock varied as follows: per cow 101 to 295 hours, per heifer 9 to 62 hours, per calf 16 to 92 hours, per bull 45 to 189 hours, and per horse 56 to 146 hours. (Table 8).

Similar variations were found in the hours of man labor required for crops. One important cause of these variations was the difference in the type of farm power used. Farms using tractor power required less man labor per acre than did those farms using horse power alone.