Family Farms in 1975 To Be Larger, Specialized

Family farms will be big- on data obtained in a larger and more highly speci- ger USDA study to assess our Nation's agriculture.

hazed in 1975-and they the job of agriculture and will continue to dominate agricultural research in meeting future needs.

This conclusion comes from Findings indicate that farom a recent analysis, by mers will continue to step ARS agricultural economist up adoption of labor-saving II L Stewart, of prospect- and out-put - increasing ive changes in farming dur- techniques. They will puring the next 15 years. The chase additional equipment analysis was based in part needed for more complete

mechanization of crop production and livestock feedfertilizing, and obtain more location. professional management assistance, including help in to increase in size and de- California. A few dairy farms buying and selling livestock, crease in number Many may be integrated with a

to increase the size of their enterprises — without losing their control of management

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ing operations. They will al- mist believes, will vary con- ated business. so hire more services, such siderably, depending on type as spraying, dusting and of operation and geographic having unusual location and

small herds will gradually feed business, whose priduction materials and services will help farm operators able to invest the extra feed sales volume. capital necessary to meet stricter sanitation requirements and to obtain advantages of larger scale opera-Changes in size of farm tion Even so, Stewart be enterprises between now and lieves, dairying in 1975 will 1975, the agricultural econo-still be largely a family-oper

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Exceptions will be those specialization advantages as Dairy farms will continue the drylot daries in southern

> Average number of cows on family-operated dairy farms may increase 25 to 30 per cent by 1975. This is about the same percentage increase that occurred during the past 15 years. Farms with stanchion barns will probably average 30 to 35 cows, and farms equip**ped** with loose housing may aver age as high as 40 to 50 cows.

Dairymen in the Northeast will probably intensify forage production at the expense of grain production and ouy more concentrates In the Midwest, they will likely increase production of forages and grains

Other livestock farmers also will take advantage of labor-saving techniques and specialization to reduce unit production costs. Stewart says, however, that reductions in unit costs usually tend to level out within the size range of family farms

USDA studies, for example, have shown that unit costs on a large-scale livestock farm are only 5 percent lower than such costs on a comparable 1 man farm In an Illinois Agricultural Experiment Station survey in northern Illinois, optimum use of land, labor, an**d cap**ital was found on farms of 260 to 339 acres

Hog Production May Expand In the Corn Belt, limited forage supplies will encourage some livestock farmers to expand hog production rather than beef production Labor requirements, as well as capital and managerial limitations, will prevent expansion to the 1,000 or more hogs that one man can raise But 500 to 600 hogs per farm (compared to an average of 170 today) may be commonplace by 1975. Hog oroducers will increase feed grain supplies by shortening crop rotations and using more fertilizer. But they will

centrates. Corn Belt farmers not in position to expand hog production may put greater emphasis on beef cattle in an effort to increase efficiency and meet market demands for uniform quality of products. Other farmers in the area may discontinue all livestock enterprises Many of these operators will take off-farm jobs and shift to cash-crop production as a

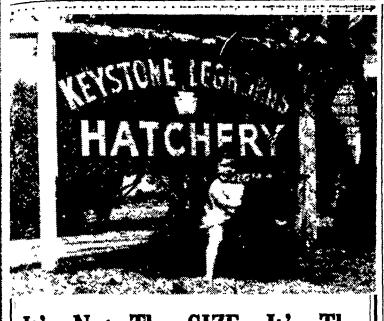
need to buy additional con-

part time operation Cattle ranches, Stewart believes, will change less in the next 15 years than Corn Belt livestock farms, becauranchers are already highly specialized and have few production alternatives But these primary producers of feeder cattle will need to increase volume of business and develop uniform product quality to meet specifications of order buyers and contract

Large-scale livestock feedng will become increasingly important in the West and Southwest, where expanding markets coincide with abundant supplies of livestock feed grains, and supplemental forage But the size of these enterprises will be checked somewhat by managerial limitations and associated risks and uncertanties Farm-sized teeding operations will continue to predominate in the Midwest because of the availability of farm-grown feeds and otherwise unmarketable operator and family labor

Vertical integration will almost surely dominate the broiler and egg industries Production in 1975 will be largely under contract-with producers providing labor. housing, and equipment, and

(Turn to page 12)



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