

## General Plans Made For '69 Ag. Census

The conduct of the 1969 Census of Agriculture will differ in a number of important ways from the conduct of previous censuses of agriculture. Farmers will be asked to fill out and mail back their questionnaires, and enumerators will be used only to follow-up as necessary. A full questionnaire will go only to the larger farms and a simplified questionnaire will be sent to the smaller farms. Some of the detailed questions which apply to only a limited number of farms will be covered in special questionnaires to be sent out after the main questionnaires have been collected.

In 1964, 27.5 percent of the farms had a gross value of sales of \$10,000 or over, but they accounted for more than 80 percent of the total value of farm products sold. Farms with a gross value of sales of less than \$2,500 were 42 percent of the total, but they accounted for less than 2.5 percent of the total value of sales.

In order to bring the resources spent on collecting and processing the data in line with the economic contribution of the farms, two versions of the general questionnaire will be used. For larger farms, the content will be similar to that of the 1964 questionnaire. For smaller farms, an abbreviated version will be used which will call for less detail than that for the larger farms. Tabulations and publications will show some data for all farms and the more detailed information only for the larger farms. Tentatively the dividing line is set at a gross value of sales of \$2,500.

### Content

The general farm questionnaire will be used to collect basic data on such inventory items as livestock and poultry, and specified facilities and equipment on farms as of January 1, 1970. It will also be used to collect basic production data for the year 1969 for crops and livestock, and information on land use, use of commercial fertilizers, specified expenditures and value of sales.

Certain supplemental questions will be asked of the larger commercial farms as of January 1, 1971. These will be adapted to the type of farm involved, including those specializing in vegetables, fruit, dairying, poultry and livestock. Consideration is also being given to a separate sample survey to provide data by States on farm debt, taxes, and related subjects.

For the year 1969, data will also be collected from individuals, establishments and operations that obtain more than half of their annual income by performing agricultural services such as custom or contract planting, spraying or harvesting; veterinary services; feed grinding and mixing; etc.

### Relation

A Census of Population and Housing is to be taken as of April 1, 1970. This census will be the primary source of data on the characteristics of rural people, including those living on farms. The information to be collected in that census includes an identification of households living on farms and data concerning the age, sex, color, family status, education, occupation, and income of the population. Information will also be provided about farm housing, including data on the characteristics of the housing units, as well as certain items of equipment within them. It is planned to bring together the information from the Census of Agriculture and the Census of Population and Housing for a carefully se-

lected sample. Accordingly, the Census of Agriculture questionnaire will not include questions concerning the members of the farm operator's household as was done in 1964.

### Advantages

The proposed new data collection and processing methods are expected to produce more and better information than previous censuses. The January 1 reference date for livestock and poultry inventories now agrees with the date used by the U. S. Department of Agriculture for their annual estimates.

The burden on respondents will be reduced. (1.) Farmers will be able to fill questionnaires after the end of the reference year; thus, they will be relieved of the necessity of estimating future action. (2.) Questionnaires may be filled at a time preferred by farmers, subject to reason-

able limits. (3.) One to one and one-half million respondents will be required to fill only the shorter general questionnaire. (4.) Only about one-third of all farm operators will be required to answer the questionnaires designed to secure specialized data directly pertinent to the type of agricultural operations they are conducting.

The proposed system is expected to produce more accurate agricultural statistics because errors introduced by enumerators will be reduced; respondents may be more willing to give information by mail than to a neighbor temporarily employed as an enumerator; and respondents will have more opportunity to use accounting or other farm records.

It is recognized that the approach through mailing lists prepared in advance may lead to

some differences in results from those which would be obtained if enumerators went to all rural places in order to identify those which are classified as farms. A sample survey, using an enum-

erative approach similar to that of 1964 will be conducted in order to appraise any differences which may affect the comparability of the results of the 1969 and 1964 censuses.

# WAYNE P-12

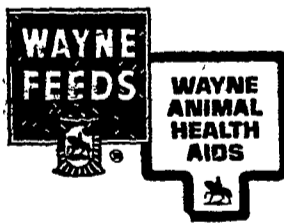
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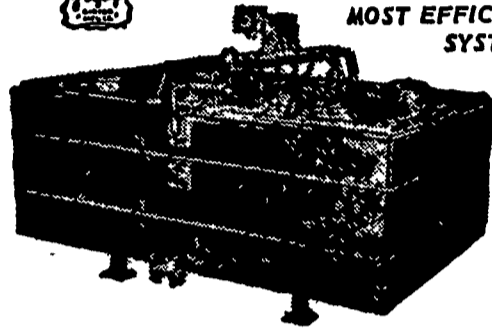
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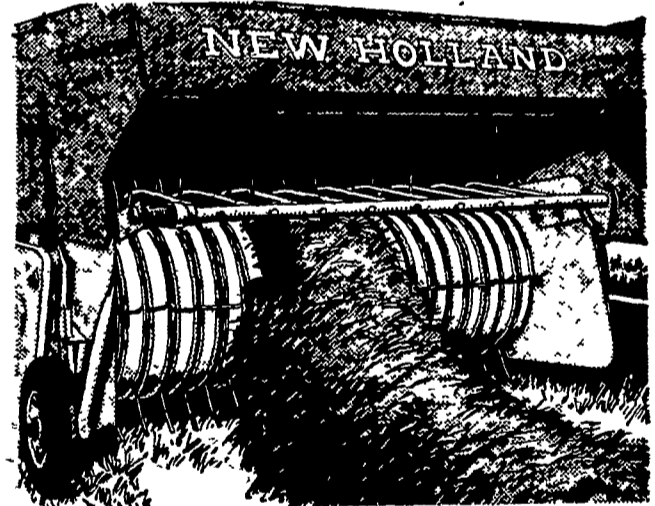


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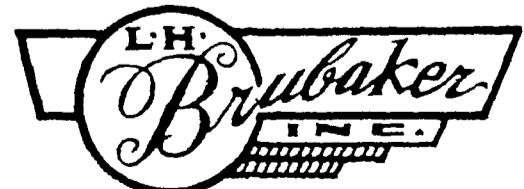
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