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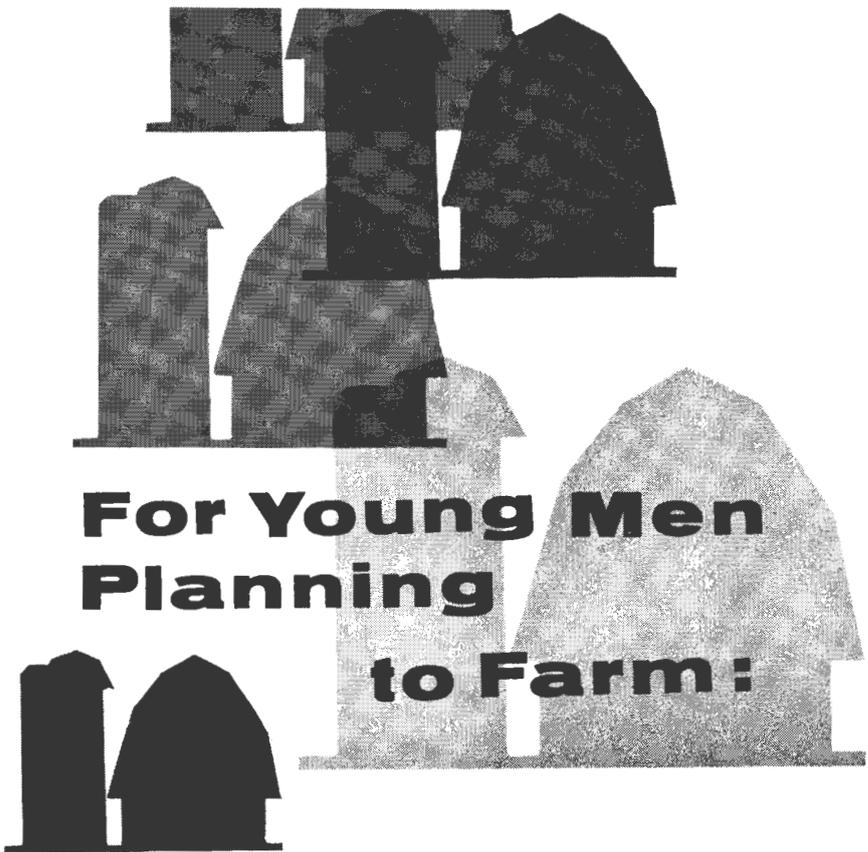


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For Young Men Planning to Farm:

If you plan to farm, the fact that the number of farms is decreasing tells only part of the story. In many ways, the larger units resulting offer increased challenge, responsibility and opportunity for those who will farm.

by Duane C. Acker

ARE YOU one of the some 2,800 Iowa farm boys graduating from high school this year who want to farm? Or are you a freshman, sophomore or junior interested in farming—or perhaps a parent interested in your son's choosing an enjoyable, satisfying and profitable occupation?

About 7,000 farm boys are reaching the age of 18 in Iowa each year. But surveys show that only about 40 percent intend to farm.

As farms are consolidated and expand in average size, the number of commercial farms in the state is decreasing. This implies a decrease in the number of op-

portunities in farming. But let's look a little closer—some of the changes taking place mean *increasing* opportunities for young men with the resources and skills to compete in modern farming.

The Facts . . .

The "average" Iowa farm operator farms for an estimated 33 years, and there are about 170,000 farms in the state. With no decrease in the number of farms in Iowa, this would mean that about 5,000 farms become available for new operators each year. But the number of farm units has been decreasing by about 1,500 each year. So there are only about 3,500 units "available" each year. This figure is an estimate. Various surveys and projections made here at Iowa State indicate that

between 3,200 and 3,800 new farm operators can find a place annually as replacements for farm operators who quit farming.

Who'll farm these newly "available" farms? Remember there are only about 2,800 farm boys graduating from high school each year who intend to farm. A few of these may not be able to farm for various reasons—change of mind, finances, health, etc. Some who don't plan to farm as high school seniors may change their minds, too. While there are a large number of farms available each year, this doesn't mean that there won't be competition for these farms.

Present farm operators may "go after" some of the land that becomes available to expand their present units, but we've taken most of this into account as the decreasing number of farms. Some farms may find their way into the conservation reserve. And some of the farm operators who may have been squeezed out in the farm-consolidation trend that's still going on will be looking for a chance to get back into farming on some of these available farms. But in spite of this stiff competition for land, we know there will be opportunities for substantial numbers of new operators each year.

The Opportunity . . .

If you plan to farm, the mere fact that there are fewer farms tells only part of the story. What about the farming units that exist that you may be eligible and qualified to handle? What kind of opportunity do they provide?

Farms now are of larger average size than they used to be. There's more gross production per farm, and the capital investment per farm has gone up. Each farm, on the average, has become more highly capitalized and more complex. Each farming operation has become a larger business.

These characteristics mean increased opportunity for young men who can gain control of

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enough capital to start on an adequate basis and who have the capacity and "know-how" to use their resources well. Certainly the pattern of agriculture that's emerging points to greater challenge and increased responsibility.

Each farm operator must be prepared to meet the challenge of a large complex business. He must be experienced in the problems that daily confront a farmer. He must be able to anticipate these problems, to recognize them when they occur and to provide a solution.

He must have the ability to allocate his labor, capital and decision-making abilities among his farming enterprises. That is, he must be able to decide quickly and wisely where his time, money and intelligence should be used. And he must know the principles of soils, crops, livestock nutrition and breeding, economics and other practical sciences to make wise decisions.

Should You Farm?

Farming is a business with many "fringe benefits." These benefits usually aren't in the form of group insurance rates, stock options, retirement programs or company medical programs that are common to some industries. They appear in the forms that you know—but which can't be precisely described—as "personal enjoyment, independence, farm living," etc.

You'll find many factors to consider in choosing an occupation. But, if you're planning to farm, I'll offer only the following four guides:

—Don't choose to farm if you aren't ambitious.

—Don't choose to farm if you aren't willing to learn and to take advantage of the experience of others.

—Don't choose to farm if you fear responsibility.

—Don't choose to farm if you can't learn to adjust constantly to change.

How To Prepare . . .

If you're one of the 2,800 Iowa farm boys graduating from high school who want to farm, how can you make yourself equal to the opportunity you may find? The first step is to gain experience. By being brought up on a farm, you've gained some of it already. Continue. Take advantage of every opportunity to master the many aspects of farming.

Take advantage and gain from the knowledge of others—especially from your father and neighbors. They've learned much over many years, and they can pass on some of this knowledge to you quicker than you can learn it through experience on your own. Experience is a forceful teacher, so don't discount what you can learn from others who've gained knowledge through experience.

Take advantage of your opportunities in vocational agriculture courses, in 4-H work and in other educational possibilities. Keep your eyes, ears and mind open. Be observing. Recognize that everything you learn today may help you tomorrow. When you come upon some knowledge that's new and different, make every effort to *apply* this knowledge wherever you can.

If possible, take advantage of the opportunities to study at your agricultural college here at Iowa State. You can learn the most recent principles and practices in soils, crops and livestock production, and you can acquire a background in the basic subjects that will enable you to better interpret and adapt to the changing economic, social and technological situation in agriculture.

Farm communities need young men to provide leadership in improved production practices, marketing methods and business management. They also need leaders in guiding school activities, farm organizations, churches and government processes. An important part of college work is in the area of social sciences and communica-

tions arts to better prepare you for these leadership responsibilities.

Help From Here . . .

Your College of Agriculture at Iowa State offers study opportunities in many fields. With the challenge that exists for young men who intend to begin farming in the last half of the twentieth century, the college offers several types of opportunities designed especially for young men who plan to farm. They're designed to round out and supplement your previous experience and training for farming. Specifically, these are the college programs in "Farm Operation."

There's a 3-month winter quarter special series of courses designed particularly for young men who can spend only the winter season—December, January and February—away from the farm. Many young men return in successive winters for additional courses. Some continue to complete the 2-year program or the full 4-year program leading to the Bachelor of Science degree. A student may enter any quarter and stay as many quarters as he feels are of benefit to him.

Most young men begin the 2- or 4-year program in September, though they may begin also in December, March or June. Because each farming operation is unique, an individual program of courses can be worked out by each young man, with his faculty adviser, to help him become better able to handle the particular farming opportunity that exists for him.

If you're interested in coming to Iowa State, we'll be glad to provide additional information. Contact your local county extension director, too. You'll find him helpful and interested in your plans. Whether you plan to come to Iowa State or not, he'll also be able to help you take advantage of the continuing off-campus services available from the College of Agriculture's Extension Service and Experiment Station.