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## EC30 If You Farm : Your County Extension Agent and Agricultural Advisory Committee will Help You

George Hendrix

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# If You Farm

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*Your County Extension Agent  
and Agricultural Advisory  
Committee will Help You.*



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EXTENSION CIRCULAR ~ 30

### Returning Veterans:

Farming is both a business and a way of life. In very few occupations are the family and home so closely associated with the business.

As a business, farming requires a great deal of knowledge, training, skill and hard work. Successful farmers have learned from experience, from reading, and from discussing problems with others. The experiments and teachings of State Agricultural Colleges and the United States Department of Agriculture have also contributed much to the progress that has been made.

Incomes from farming vary greatly, but over a period of years, will compare favorably with incomes from other undertakings in the same communities. As a way of life, farming may provide peace and comfort with your family and neighbors, and make it possible to enjoy the freedoms for which you have been fighting. Producing food, with the help of Mother Nature, may be a welcome change from your recent experiences.

It is important that both the husband and wife should be interested in the farm business and enjoy farm-living. If either lacks interest or is unhappy, because of living on a farm, it would be better to choose some other occupation.

This circular has been prepared to help you find out about farming in the community where you wish to locate and to assist you in getting useful information, should you decide to farm. If you farmed before entering the service, there are probably changes you should learn about. If you have not farmed previously, there is a great deal to be learned from those with experience.

County Agricultural Advisory Committees have been organized in most Nebraska counties. County Extension Agents and other public spirited men and women are members. Most committee members have had farming experience and many of them are veterans of World War I. These men and women will not make decisions for you, but will try to answer your questions and give you the benefit of their knowledge and experience.

May we suggest that you talk over your plans with the County Extension Agent and other members of the Committee. They will be glad to help you.

Very truly yours,

*W. H. Brokaw*

Nebraska Agricultural Extension  
Service

AGRI  
EXTENSION  
FILE



# If You Farm

by George Hendrix\*

In this circular you will find discussion of the following topics on the pages given:

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## General Information

### Where to Get Additional Training—

If you plan to farm in the future, you may wish to take advantage of the training provisions of the "G. I. Bill of Rights," and return to school. County agricultural agents are employees of the University of Nebraska and can get you the information you need about enrollment and courses of study. Many of them are graduates of the University of Nebraska, College of Agriculture.



\* Assisted by the Staff of the Nebraska Agricultural Extension Service.

**How to Start to Farm**—It is not possible or advisable for all persons who wish to farm to start as farm owners. You may start as a hired man or as a tenant, or in partnership with relatives or friends. Those who start at the bottom of the agricultural ladder and work up gradually will be better off in most instances than those who start too high on the ladder and fail.

Your previous training, experience, and the amount of your own capital available will determine the best place to start. Members of the county advisory committee can offer some very helpful suggestions.



**Types of Farms**—The principal types of farms in Nebraska are general, livestock, cash grain, cattle ranching, poultry, dairy, and fruit. A type should be selected in which the operator is interested and for which he has skill and training. It is also important that the land, buildings, equipment, and markets be suited for the type selected.

**Selecting a Farm to Rent**—It is not often possible for beginners to operate the best farms in a community, but it is advisable to avoid the poorest. It is very difficult to make progress on a farm that is low in productivity and unsuited to the type of farming that is to be carried on. Soils, topography, the number of acres, the kind and condition of buildings, nearness to markets, and the willingness of the landlord to cooperate are all important. If operators

have changed frequently, there is probably a reason, and the county advisory committee can tell you about it.

**Selecting a Farm to Buy.**—More cautions should be used in buying a farm than in renting one, for mistakes are usually more costly. The wise selection of a farm is vital to the success and satisfaction of farm life. The neighborhood, school, and church are about as important as the land, buildings, and markets. The happiness and welfare of the whole family must be considered.

**Land Values**—Paying too much for a farm can prove a serious mistake. This is especially true if it is necessary to go into debt to buy it.

Before buying a farm, find out from the county advisory committee how much the land is worth under normal conditions and the net income that can be expected from the type of farming to be followed.

**The Total Investment**—Few beginners have enough money of their own to buy the land, the equipment, and the livestock for a full-time farm business; however, by renting the land and using credit to help purchase equipment and livestock, it is possible to become a farm operator without owning a large amount of capital. The amount of money needed to buy equipment and livestock varies according to the size and type of farm.





**Safe Margins of Indebtedness**—Members of the county agricultural advisory committees can give good advice about safe margins of indebtedness. Margins of safety vary according to the purpose for which the money is borrowed, the risks of production, and the price outlook. Your health and that of your family, and your willingness to practice self-denial when the need arises, are other factors to consider.

The entire future of an individual may depend upon the reputation gained in the early years of business for the repayment of loans.



**Sources of Credit**—In most counties there are several sources of credit for loans that can be made on a sound basis. Special provisions to veterans are made by the "G. I." bill.

The kind of security required, interest rates, methods of repayment, and other terms of loans vary between lenders and according to the type and purpose of the loan. Before borrowing, get all of the information available about sources of credit and terms of loans.

**Organizing and Planning the Farm Business**—Two farms of the same size, type and soil may vary widely in income and security because of difference in organization. Conservation of the soil, the size of business, the kind of crops, the number and kinds of livestock, distribution of labor and the marketing of products are all important.

Sound practical help can be obtained in the organization of a profitable farm business and well organized farms can be visited.

Planning books are available for making long-time plans and estimates of income. Planning a long-time program will pay well in dollars and cents and should be done by the entire family.

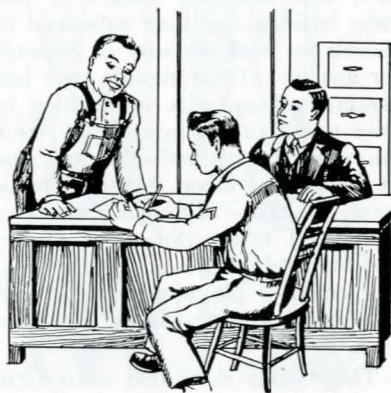
## Farm Management

**Farm Leases and Partnership Agreements**—Farm lease forms for veterans who wish to rent either under the share-cash or stock-share arrangement are available at the county extension agent's office.

Father-son agreements are available for veterans who have little or no capital and want to form partnerships with their fathers.

Information can also be obtained on customary rental agreements.

**Farm Records**—Good business methods are needed for the successful operation of a farm. A complete record of the farm business helps determine the



best sources of income and the points of weakness in the farm business. A record of the money spent by the family for living expenses helps in making the income fit the needs of the family and in accumulating savings.

You can get both farm and home record books from your county extension agent. He will be glad to give helpful instruction for keeping them.

Agents in many counties will assist in the summary and analysis of the books at the end of the year or will send them to the Department of Rural Economics, Agricultural College, for summary.



**Farm Business Summaries**—For many years a few Nebraska farmers have kept complete records of their farm business and have submitted the records to the University of Nebraska for analysis. These records have been summarized and give information relative to the capital investment, size of business, rates of production, efficiency in the use of labor, feed and equipment, balance of organization, expenses and income. Since this information is based on the actual experience of farmers it can serve as a valuable supplement to the advice of local farmers.

The records show that some farms are too small and too low in produc-

tivity for efficient operation and satisfactory returns to the operator. The size of business can be increased by renting additional land, by increasing the numbers of livestock, by changing from low labor requiring animals such as beef cattle and sheep to dairy cattle and poultry, or by shifting from extensive crops such as hay and pasture to intensive crops like corn and soybeans. Farms that are low in productivity may need adjustments in land use and the type of organization.

**Price Outlook**—Most farm enterprises require several months between the time a production program is planned and the time the products are ready for sale. Changes in prices almost always occur between the two periods. Valuable outlook information is available to help determine the price changes that may occur.

Seasonal variations in prices are also very important. Find out the production schedules necessary for getting products on to the market at favorable seasons of the year.

**Labor Requirements**—A good farm organization will provide full time employment throughout the year. The returns per hour and per year are both important items to consider in organizing a farm. Information is available, giving the labor requirements of various crop and livestock enterprises by seasons.

Efficiency in the use of labor is also important and there is a wide variation between farms. It may take twice as long on one farm to grow an acre of corn as on another without any greater production.

**Machinery Costs**—Approximately 20 per cent of the expense of operating an average farm are machinery costs. There are bulletins, circulars, and other information at the county extension agent's office relative to machinery costs and the factors affecting costs.



## Family Life and Homemaking

If you are thinking of going into a strange community to work or to farm, your advisory committee can tell you about the people in the neighborhood, how well they cooperate, their churches and schools, what they do for entertainment, and how they will receive new comers. Being happy in your new life is important and doubly so for your wife and children.



**4-H Clubs, Project Clubs**—In some neighborhoods, most of the boys and girls belong to 4-H clubs or would be glad to take part if clubs were organized. Those of you with 4-H club experience know the value of it. Likewise, in some neighborhoods most of the women belong to project clubs of the Extension Service in which they learn new methods of homemaking and enjoy visiting with neighboring women at the same time. Practical demonstrations are given at project club meetings by leaders and by home extension agents or state home economic specialists.



**Rural Youth**—Those of you who are from 19 to 25 years of age may be particularly interested in the rural youth program being encouraged by county extension agents. These groups of young people meet together for social affairs and for serious consideration of their common problems. Not all counties have rural youth groups but more of them will get together as the young people return from war activities. You can help organize such a group if you are interested. Most of the groups are county-wide now, since the number of young people to whom such activities appeal is limited.





**The Farm House**—Attention should be given to the farm house into which you may move as a renter or owner, to its relation to the rest of the farmstead and to the highway, and to its usefulness and comfort in summer and winter. Conveniences may not be the same as those to which you are accustomed. How much improvement can be made now or in the future is important. Your ideal in a house may not

be reached in the near future so all members of the family must be willing to start with what is available. Having a house and home of your own, built or rebuilt as you want it, is worth working for.

Much literature is available at the county extension office about home making, gardening, yard beautification, poultry raising and other topics in which farm women are particularly interested.

## Crops and Soils

Many changes in methods of producing and harvesting field crops have been made during the last few years. Those of you who have been away three years or more years will be impressed with some of these changes. More power machines, greater attention to soil conservation, and increased irrigation are the most important but there are many others. Those of you who have not farmed here before will find that the methods followed by the most successful farmers are usually well adapted to the soils, climate, and markets of the community. These progressive farmers are always trying something new and will continue to use it if results are satisfactory. They know from experience when and how to plant and till and harvest. The county advisory committee includes such men and also the county extension agent, who has the latest scientific information available.

Farmers' experiences and the results of research are being combined to find the answers to problems connected with crops and soils. Specific information can be secured on the following topics:

Methods of soil conservation that will permit maximum production of the best paying crops. These methods are under constant study, in cooperation with the Soil Conservation Service.



Irrigation methods and practices that will give highest yields with efficient use of water and labor.

Kinds and varieties of crops best suited to climate, soils, and market. Some of the newer varieties are yielding from 10 to 20 per cent more than older varieties.

Seed bed preparation and planting methods most likely to secure good stands and plant growth.

Selection of pure seeds of all crops from growers of certified seed.

Range and pasture management, establishing new stands of grass, rotation and deferred grazing, and the use of grass-legume mixtures.

Conditions under which the use of fertilizer, lime and manure will prove profitable.

The time, depth, manner and number of cultivations that will produce high yields, with the most efficient use of labor and equipment.

Weed control programs for bindweed, Canada thistle and other noxious weeds which are carried on in cooperation with the State Department of Agriculture.

Time and methods of harvesting crops.



## Vegetables and Fruits

Vegetables and fruits can be grown successfully in most sections of the state, but suitable varieties and methods of production vary widely.

**Home Use**—On most farms, it is advisable to grow vegetables and fruits for home use. They reduce the cash expenses of family living and help provide a healthful diet. Families who depend upon the purchase of these foods often neglect to purchase sufficient quantities. The county extension agent can be of considerable help in these problems. Circulars are available about farm vegetable gardens and fruit for home use.

Canning and storing fruits and vegetables so that a supply will be available throughout the year is just as important as growing them in the first place and at times may be a more difficult problem. A great deal of valuable information can be secured relative to methods of canning and storing to provide the most palatable flavors and maintain the highest nutritional values of foods. Home extension agents can help homemakers with food preservation problems and all extension agents have literature which gives directions for canning, freezing, drying, and storing vegetables and fruits.



**Commercial Production**—There are areas in the state where potatoes, vegetables and fruits can be successfully grown commercially. County extension agents can be of service in advising prospective growers of each region as to the varieties to grow, the site to choose, the type of rotation, fertilization, and irrigation.

They can also help with other phases of production and marketing.

In the case of commercial fruit plantings, special assistance can be obtained in spacing, early pruning, thinning, spraying, harvesting, and marketing.



## Trees and Shrubs

You may get seedling trees from the agricultural extension service to plant a windbreak or woodlot on your farm. These trees are available at nominal cost through provisions of the Clarke-

McNary Act. The county extension agent can give you suggestions about trees and shrubs to use for farmstead beautification, and also about management of woodland that may be on your place.

## Plant Diseases

All persons growing plants in Nebraska must face the hazard of plant diseases. In recent years, great progress has been made in their control. Some of these diseases, such as the smuts of small grains, can be readily seen and the losses computed, whereas other diseases may affect the roots of the plant and the only visible evidence of disease is an unthrifty plant. To apply the proper control measures you must first correctly identify the disease. By virtue of his experience in the county and with the aid of bulletins, circulars, and other publications dealing with specific and general disease problems, the county extension agent will be able to advise you regarding the identity of a disease and the proper disease control methods. If necessary he can consult the extension specialist at the College of Agriculture.

**Seed Treatment and Disease Free Seed**—Many plant diseases result from parasitic organisms carried either on or inside the seed. Those organisms carried on the surface of the seed, such as stinking smut of wheat, can be controlled by treating the seed with chemicals. In addition, these chemicals greatly improve stands by protecting the seed and seedling from the numerous parasitic organisms in the soil. Several new materials have been placed on the market in recent years that are easy to use and not likely to injure seed germination. These materials have been thoroughly tested at the Experiment Station and the results made available through the local county exten-

sion agent. When the disease-producing organisms is carried inside the seed, then he may be able to advise where disease-free seed may be obtained. This is especially important with beans and potatoes.



**Crop Rotations**—Many disease-producing organisms live in the soil. Numerous experiments, particularly with potatoes, have shown that rotations involving certain crops are quite effective in preventing the development of various diseases. Crop rotation is one of the most important and effective disease-control measures, not only with potatoes but with all field and garden crops.

**Spray Materials and Spray Schedules**—Spray materials have also received attention in recent years and several new materials are even more effective than Bordeaux Mixture against certain diseases. Sprays are widely used in the

control of fruit diseases but to be effective they must be applied at the proper time. In addition, the proper spray material must be used. Spray schedules are available and these should be carefully followed. Sprays and dusts are also used for leaf and bud diseases of ornamental plants and certain specific diseases, such as tomato leaf spot and potato late blight.

**Resistant Varieties**—Resistant varieties represent the most desirable disease control measure. In recent years, considerable progress has been made in developing varieties of oats and wheat

resistant to certain types of the rusts and smuts, similar progress is being made in obtaining disease-resistant varieties of other crops.

The development of disease-resistant varieties of crops involves many years of selecting and testing. The final tests are often conducted in fields arranged for by the county agricultural extension agent where growers can observe the various varieties under conditions similar to those on their own farms. By means of such demonstration plots, meetings, and publications, disease-control information is brought to the growers as soon as it is available.

## Insects, Bees, Rodents

One of the major problems in practically all agricultural enterprises is the control of various insect pests that often may be the deciding factor between financial success or failure. The Nebraska agricultural extension service through its county agents and the co-operating agencies at the Nebraska College of Agriculture, provides the means of solving many of these problems.

Insect problems on Nebraska farms include control of field crop pests, orchard and garden pests, livestock parasites, household pests, stored grain and other stored product pests, termites, and various pests of shade trees and ornamentals. Information on practically all of these can be secured from the county extension office, and bulletins and circulars dealing with the majority of them are available without cost. The department of entomology at the Nebraska College of Agriculture stands ready at any time to cooperate by identifying insect pests of all types.

In counties where grasshoppers are a serious problem, the county agent is designated by the federal government as the county grasshopper control leader, and government grasshopper bait is made available to farmers

through his office at a slight handling cost.

In chinch bug infested counties, government creosote for construction of chinch bug barriers is made available at slight cost through the office of the county agent who is designated by the federal government as the county chinch bug control leader.

**Beekeeping**—This work is rapidly increasing in importance in the state, and the Nebraska agricultural extension service through its county agents and the cooperation of the department of





entomology at the Nebraska College of Agriculture provides latest information through bulletins, circulars and individual correspondence. In some cases actual demonstration help is available.

**Rodents and Predatory Animals—** Latest information on control of various rodents such as rats, pocket gophers, prairie dogs, ground squirrels, woodchucks, rabbits, etc. is available from the county extension agent. This consists of bulletins and circulars, personal letters, and in many cases practical dem-

onstrations and assistance in use of control methods. Rodent baits prepared by the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service are rendered available through cooperating organizations and individuals. Control of predatory animals, such as coyotes, is on the same basis as control of rodents. Countywide control campaigns for rodents and predatory animals may be organized by the extension service in cooperation with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and various local agencies and organizations.

## Livestock and Livestock Products

Nebraska is half grass land, and the main field crops are the feed grains. In some sections of the state you might have a grain farm or a specialized one-crop farm, but by far the greatest part of the state is devoted to production of feed and livestock. Corn and hogs; and grass, roughages, feed grains and cattle go together. Production of meat is the Number One Industry of the state, with livestock products like milk, eggs, and wool adding to the total income of farmers.

Part of Nebraska's advantage as a livestock producing state is due to comparatively low feed prices. This advantage is considerable when rations are built around farm produced feed supplemented by protein concentrates and during recent years there has been a big increase in the purchase of high protein feeds by farmers. A knowledge of the information obtained as a result of studies made at the Nebraska College of Agriculture can go a long way toward making livestock enterprises profitable. Feed constitutes about 60 per cent of the cost of poultry production, 55 to 60 per cent of the cost of milk production and 75 to 80 per cent of the cost of producing pork and beef.

Growing a large share of your feed supply and converting it into livestock is generally profitable. This practice not only increases farm income but also

gives it more stability and a wider distribution through the year. Some of the profit generally comes from the use made of crop residues and roughages which might otherwise go to waste.

While yields of crops and carrying capacities of pastures vary from year to year, the county advisory committee can tell you about how many acres of grain it generally takes to put a litter of pigs on the market and how many head of cattle or sheep a pasture or range will carry. They can advise with you about additional sources and probable costs additional feeds, and about necessary equipment and watering facilities.

Buying breeding stock brings up the problem of getting quality stock that



is free of disease, and at a price within your means. The committee can probably direct you to producers of good stock where you can get most of your start. If you are interested in purebreds, they might also help you find a purebred sire or a few females for the foundation of your future herd. Only a few men become outstanding livestock breeders, and they get more of their satisfaction out of breeding and raising their own lines of breeding than from buying individuals from others.

The kind of livestock you keep depends upon your preference, the amount and kind of pasture and feed available, the help you have from your family, your local market, and the production of others in the neighborhood. Plenty of family help who are interested in poultry and dairy production helps make these two enterprises profitable. The county advisory committee can answer your questions about local markets for specialized or high quality products and about the competition you might have from those already in production. Cream, eggs, beef and pork find a ready market at average prices anywhere in the state, but some other products may be more difficult to market to advantage.

High death losses from disease can quickly wipe out profits in livestock production. Disease prevention through



proper sanitation, culling and feeding will do much to reduce these losses. County Extension Agents will be glad to refer you to farms in the community where the best practices are carried out.

Your county extension agent can help you measure production of milk cows in a dairy herd improvement association, or egg production in poultry cost accounts. He can enroll you in the pasture forage livestock program, or supply you with information about turkey production. Much experimental work on livestock feeding has been done at the Nebraska College of Agriculture. Results are published in bulletins and circulars which are available at the county extension agent's office.





## Buildings, Power and Machinery

On almost every farm in Nebraska, the buildings need paint, repair, remodeling or rebuilding. Fixing fences, gates, and doors is a continuous job on all farms. Should you plan to make major repairs, rebuild, or build new



buildings, plans and suggestions can be obtained through the county extension agents, and the county advisory committee can direct you to some of the better farmsteads of the county where you can make personal observations.

Your investment in power and machinery will be relatively high. This is particularly true in parts of the state where corn, small grain, hay, and possibly irrigated crops like beets and potatoes, are all grown on the same farm. Your county committee can advise with you regarding the pieces of equipment that are most essential, and that which you might plan to get on a custom-hire or exchange basis. They might help you make arrangements with your closest neighbors so that what you do get would fit in with power and machinery already on hand. For example, if your two closest neighbors have haying equipment but their mow-

ers are getting old, you might buy a mower to help round out the pool so the three of you could do your haying together. If you are a good hand to adjust and repair machinery, you will enjoy having a well equipped farm shop and can save time and money in doing your own repair work. Plans and suggestions for a farm work shop are available at county extension agents' offices.

About one-fourth of the farms in Nebraska are now electrified, and more are getting hooked up each season. Your county advisory committee can get in touch with those in charge of R. E. A. in the county or area and also furnish you information about efficient use of electrical power for lights, grinders, brooders, water systems, water heaters, and shop and household equipment in the next few years. Experiences of those who pioneered the way can be obtained through your advisory committee.

Changes in the use of power and equipment are being made constantly and will be even more noticeable as more new power and machinery become available after the war. Some of the



changes are due to the increased interest in conservation, some because of the shortage of labor, and some to increased irrigation. Soil conservation district supervisors and their employees and the county extension agent can give you information about conservation practices such as contouring, terracing, and grassing water-ways. They can tell you what help is available from the soil conservation district. If you would like to irrigate from a well or ditch, some help is available in laying out the irrigation system or in improving the one that is on the place. Much water and work is often wasted by the inexperienced irrigator. High yields must be obtained to make irrigation pay. Legumes, manure, and commercial fertilizer are used to increase soil fertility and yields, and the costs per acre of producing intensive irrigated crops are high. Those with experience on the advisory committee can help you realize satisfactory net returns from irrigation.

Installation of running water, sewage disposal and improved heating systems will be common in many farm homes in the near future. Help can be obtained on correct size, care and use of such conveniences.



Nothing can do more than modern equipment to save time and reduce drudgery on the farm and in the home. You may be tempted to rush into the market and over buy. Members of the county advisory committee are quite likely to be of the solid, substantial, cautious type. From their experiences during good times and hard times, they can probably give you sound advice about whether a proposed purchase is good investment or a luxury for you. Living within your means will be exceedingly important for the first few years while you are getting established.