

1957

## EC57-507 Composition and Characteristics of Nebraska's Home Extension Club Membership

Florence J. Atwood

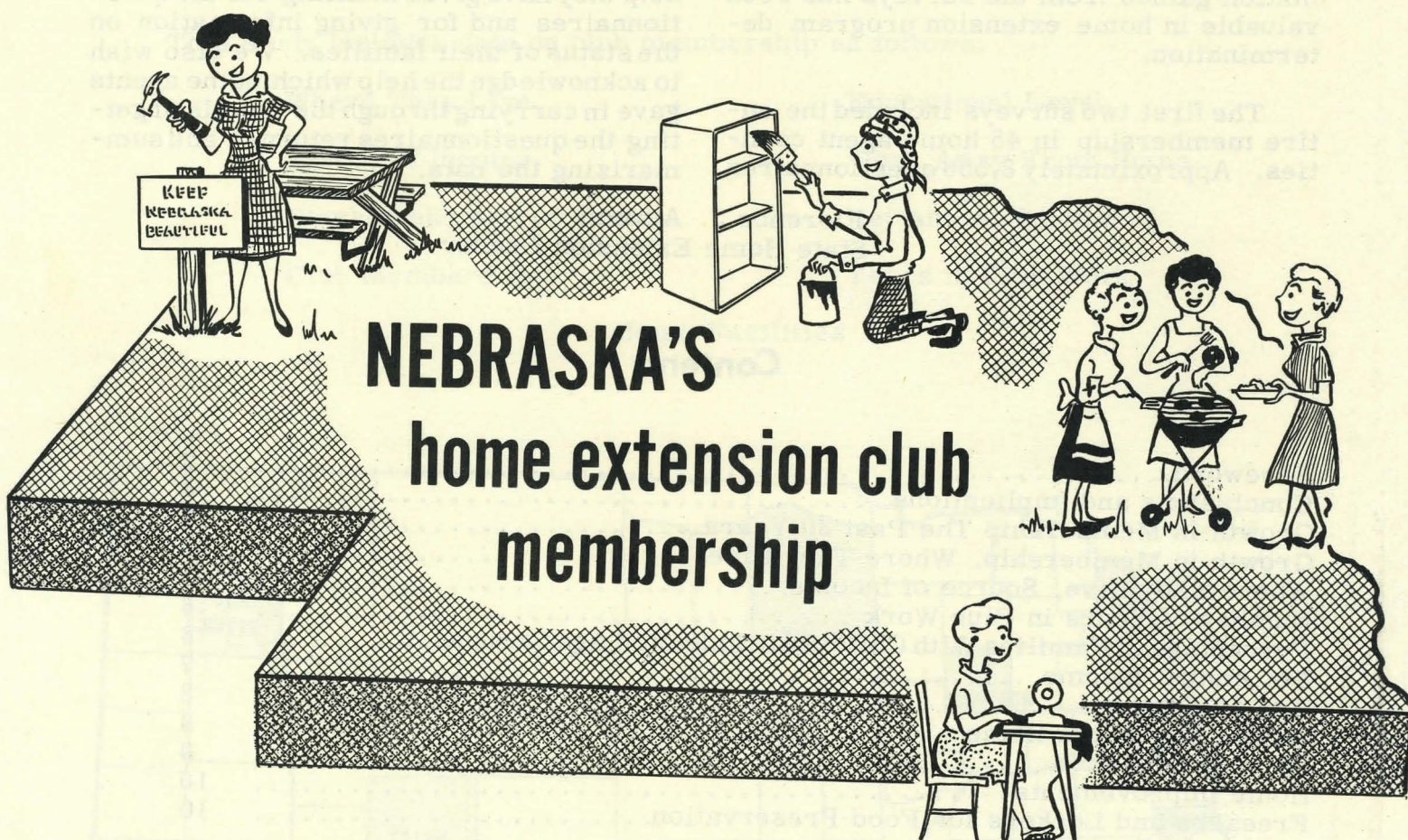
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# COMPOSITION and CHARACTERISTICS of



## NEBRASKA'S home extension club membership

EXTENSION SERVICE  
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE  
AND U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
COOPERATING  
W. V. LAMBERT, DIRECTOR



## Foreword

This is the third survey to be made on composition and characteristics of Home Extension Club members - 1950, 1953, and 1955-56. This series of surveys makes possible the comparison of facts over a period of six years, some of which are included in this circular. The information gained from the surveys has been valuable in home extension program determination.

The first two surveys included the entire membership in 45 home agent counties. Approximately 8,500 questionnaires

were returned. The third survey in 1955-56 was a spot check of 100 club members in each of 12 home agent counties. A total of 1,090 questionnaires were returned.

We would like to express appreciation to Home Extension Club members for the help they have given in filling out the questionnaires and for giving information on the status of their families. We also wish to acknowledge the help which home agents gave in carrying through the details of getting the questionnaires returned and summarizing the data.

Florence J. Atwood  
State Home Extension Leader

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# SUMMARY OF NEBRASKA'S HOME EXTENSION CLUB SURVEY

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This study includes data on club membership as follows:

Where They Live

Source of Income

Number and Age of Family

Club Members Age

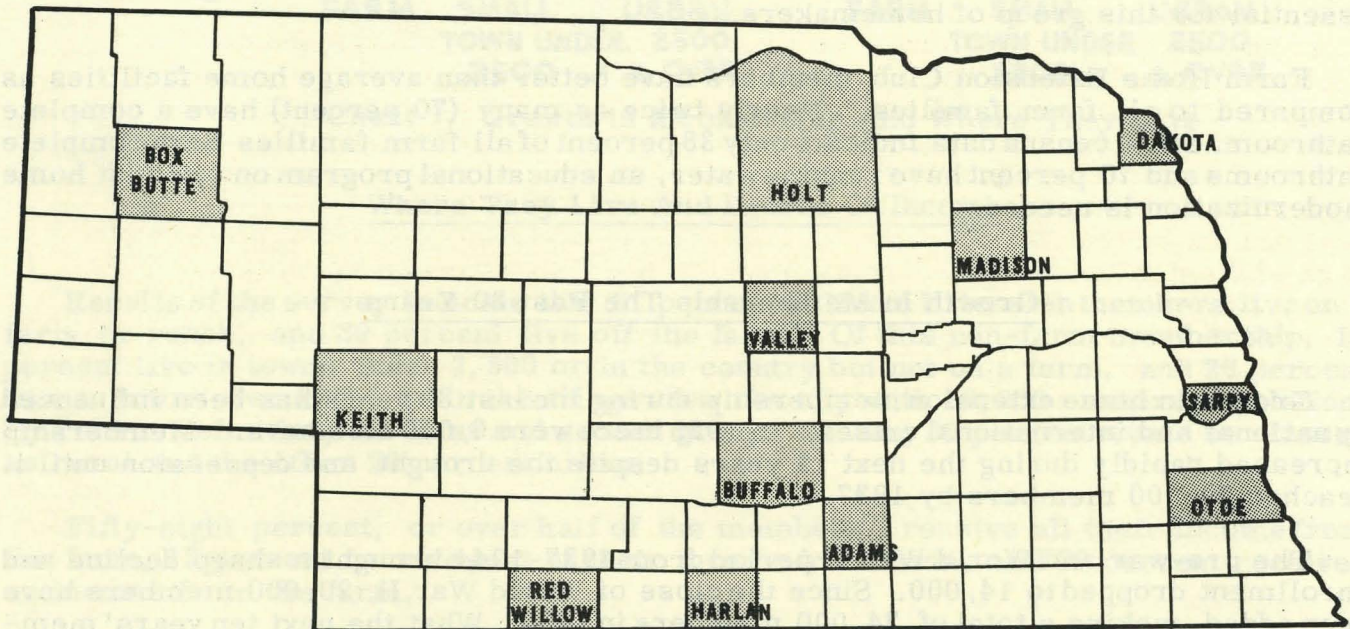
Educational Level

Work Away From Home

Net Annual Income

Years in Club Work

Home Facilities



The shaded areas indicate counties that cooperated in the survey.



## Some Conclusions And Implications For Program Projection

The Home Extension Club membership in Nebraska is 80 percent or over three-fourths rural by census definition. However, urban membership has increased 13 percent during the past six years. The expected increase in urban membership during the next five or ten years will present only limited program adjustments since homemakers' problems are similar.

Home Extension Clubs have added 9,000 members during the past six years. It is reasonable to expect that this growth will continue during the next five or ten years until 45,000 to 50,000 women are enrolled in organized groups. This is a relatively small proportion of the total number of homemakers in Nebraska and there is need to increase emphasis on methods of reaching homemakers who do not join clubs.

Planning a program to meet the needs of the newer members, who represent nearly half of the membership, and at the same time satisfying those who have a tenure of ten years or more presents a challenge. This situation is expected to continue during the coming years because of the increase in the age of members and tenure of women belonging to clubs. Helps in solving this problem are:

1. Programs which are based on the latest research and present day living trends avoid the feeling of program repetition.
2. Special interest meetings
  - (a) Which teach skills to the less experienced homemakers.
  - (b) Which are developed around basic interests and needs of the "long-time" members.

The number of homemakers who work away from home is expected to increase as opportunities for work increase. At the present time about one out of five urban and rural non-farm women are working. This presents a problem for club and leader training meetings usually held during the day. Planning for short effective programs is essential for this group of homemakers.

Farm Home Extension Club members have better than average home facilities as compared to all farm families. Nearly twice as many (70 percent) have a complete bathroom. Since census data indicate only 38 percent of all farm families have complete bathrooms and 70 percent have running water, an educational program on low cost home modernization is needed.

### Growth In Membership The Past 30 Years

Growth in home extension membership during the last 30 years has been influenced by national and international crises. In 1925 there were 6,000 members. Membership increased rapidly during the next 12 years despite the drought and depression until it reached 29,000 members by 1937.

The pre-war and World War II period from 1937-1944 brought a sharp decline and enrollment dropped to 14,000. Since the close of World War II, 20,000 members have been added, making a total of 34,000 members in 1956. What the next ten years' membership will reach is only a guess, but based on the last ten year record, there is a possibility of 40,000 to 45,000 members in 1966.



### Growth In Membership And Where They Live

Compared with a similar survey made in 1950, the 1956 survey shows a gain of 9,000 members. About 3,000 of the new members live on farms, about 1,200 in small towns, and about 5,000 in urban areas.

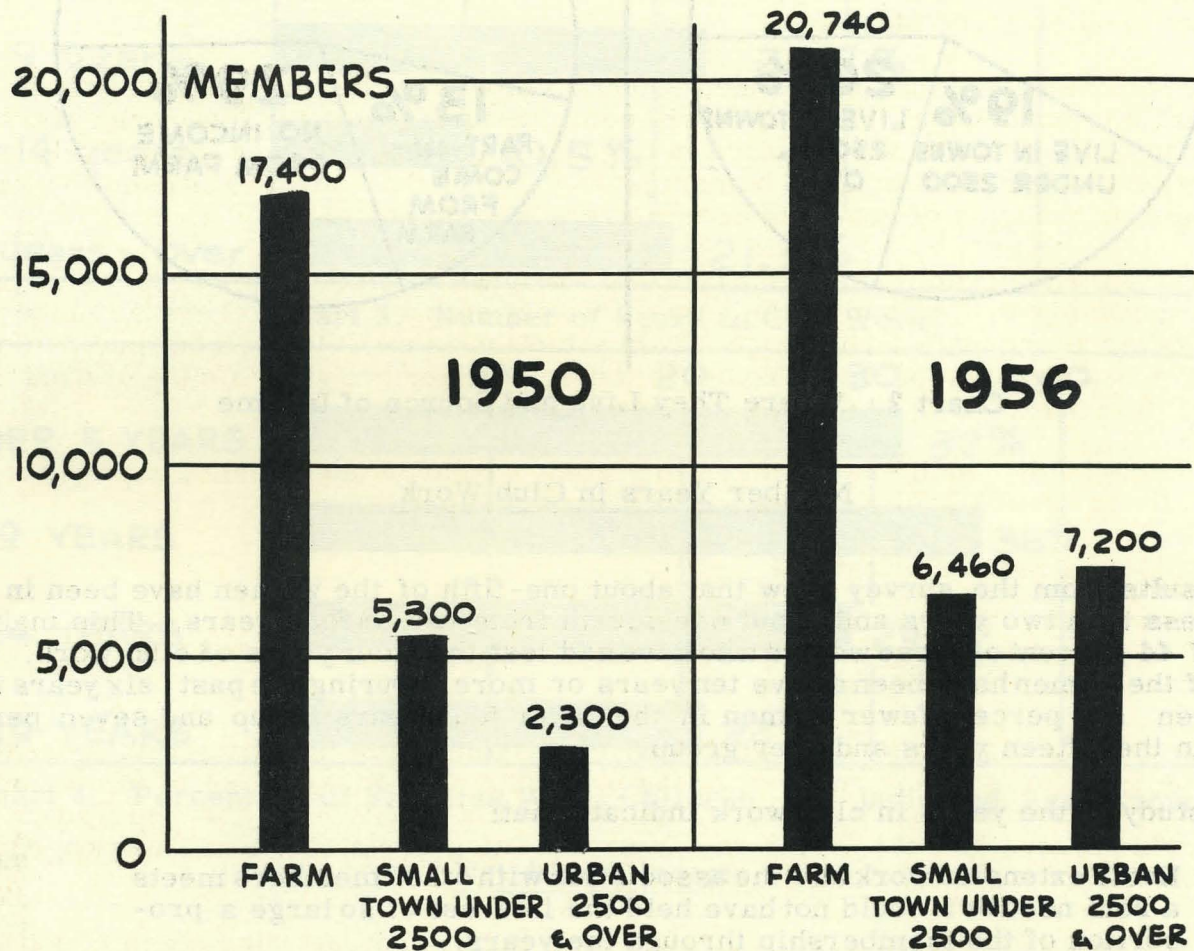


Chart 1. Growth in Membership And Where They Live

### Where They Live And Source Of Income

Results of the survey indicate that 61 percent of Home Extension members live on a farm or ranch, and 39 percent live off the farm. Of this non-farm membership, 19 percent live in towns under 2,500 or in the country but not on a farm, and 20 percent live in towns over 2,500 or in the fringe area of a city with 10,000 or more population. By census definition, the first and second groups totaling 80 percent would be classed as rural and the other 20 percent urban.

Fifty-eight percent, or over half of the members, receive all their income from the farm, 13 percent receive part of their income from farm, and 29 percent received no income from the farm.

While 61 percent of the members live on farms, 71 percent receive all or part of their income from the farm. This would mean that nearly three-fourths of the Home Extension members would be directly interested in factors that influence agriculture.



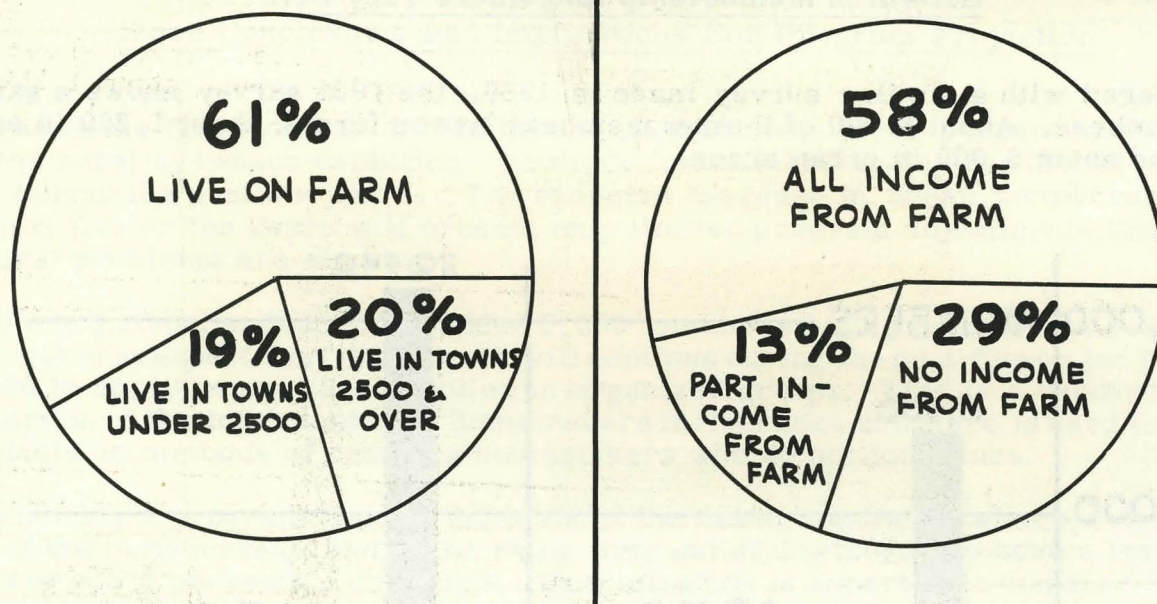


Chart 2. Where They Live and Source of Income

#### Number Years In Club Work

Results from the survey show that about one-fifth of the women have been in club work less than two years and about one-fourth from two to four years. This makes a total of 44 percent of these women who have had less than four years of club work. One-third of the women have been active ten years or more. During the past six years there has been six percent fewer women in the under four years group and seven percent more in the fifteen years and over group.

A study of the years in club work indicate that:

- Home extension work and the association with other members meets a real need or it could not have held the interest of so large a proportion of the membership through the years.
- Nearly half the women are relatively new members. They are largely young homemakers raising a family with a keen interest in subject matter.
- There is a growing tendency for the older club members to remain in club work.

This spread in tenure presents a real challenge in programing both at the county and state level. Consideration should be given to the needs of the newer members and those who may have been in club work for several years. See Chart 3.

#### Percentage Of Families With Children In Indicated Age Groups

Thirty-two percent of the women reported children of pre-school age, 36 percent had children from 5 - 9 years, 29 percent had children from 10 - 14 years, the age group most likely to enroll in 4-H Club work, and 22 percent had children from 15 - 19 years. See Chart 4.



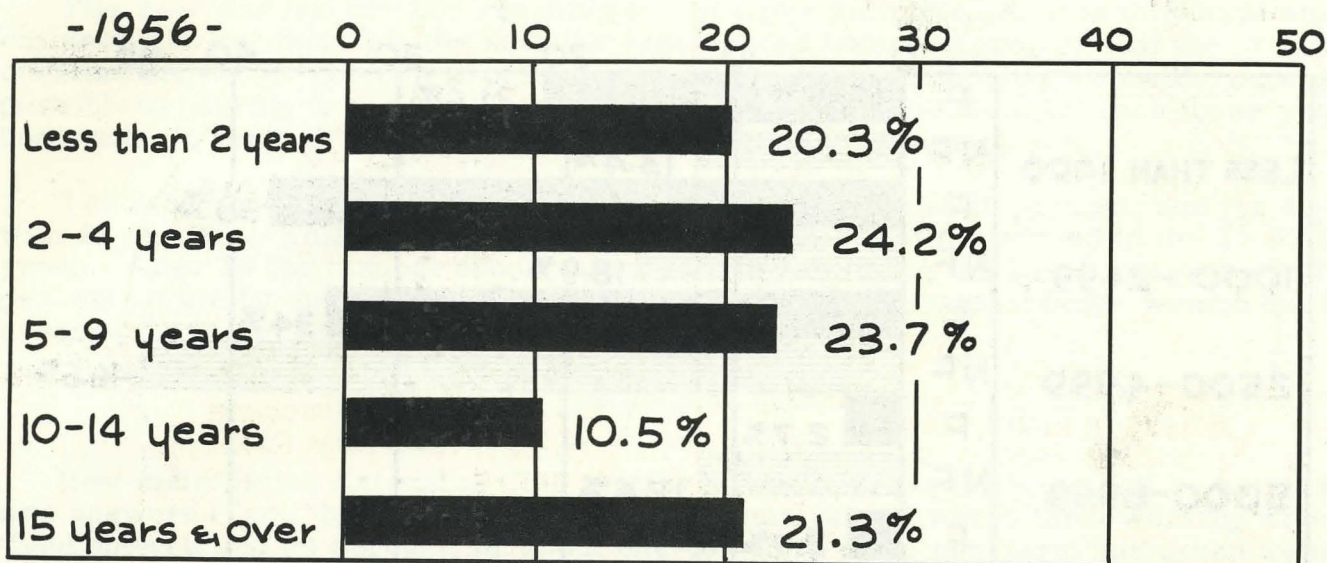


Chart 3. Number of Years in Club Work

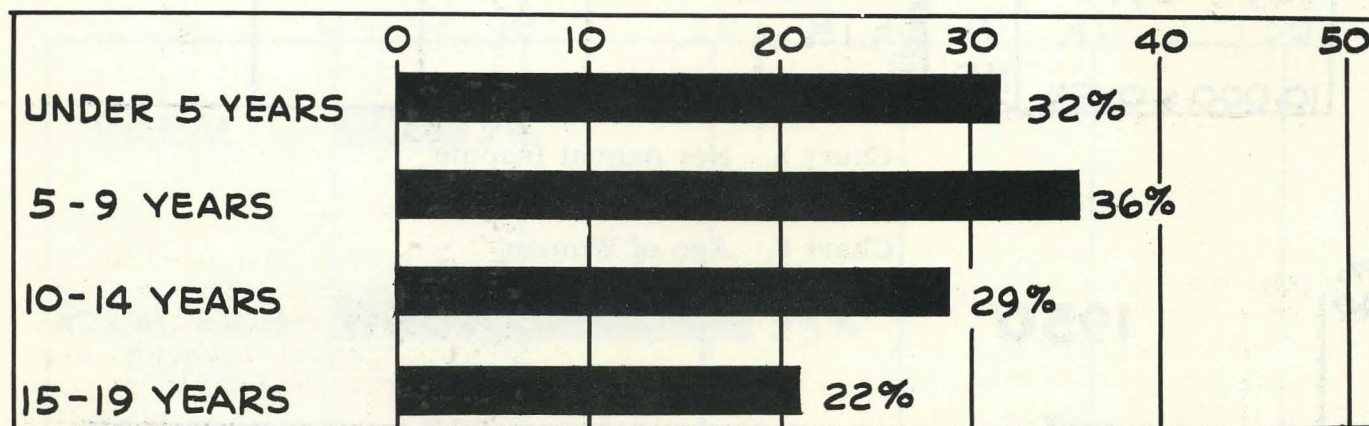


Chart 4. Percentage of Families With Children in Indicated Age Groups

#### Net Annual Income

Does the Home Extension Club program reach women of all income levels? The answer to this question has been more or less a guess until the club membership survey was made in 1956.

A comparison of the farm and non-farm net annual incomes is as follows:

59% of farm families were in the \$2,500 or below income group.

32% of non-farm families were in the \$2,500 or below income group.

34% of farm families were in the \$2,500 to \$5,000 income group.

46.7% of non-farm families were in the \$2,500 to \$5,000 income group.

7% of farm families were in \$5,000 and above income group.

21% of non-farm families were in \$5,000 and above income group.

Net annual income was explained in the survey as family income after taxes and business operating expenses had been deducted. This comparison of farm and non-farm income would indicate that the non-farm club members have a higher income than on-farm women. However, farm homemakers were not asked to account for farm produced food as a part of their income. See Chart 5.



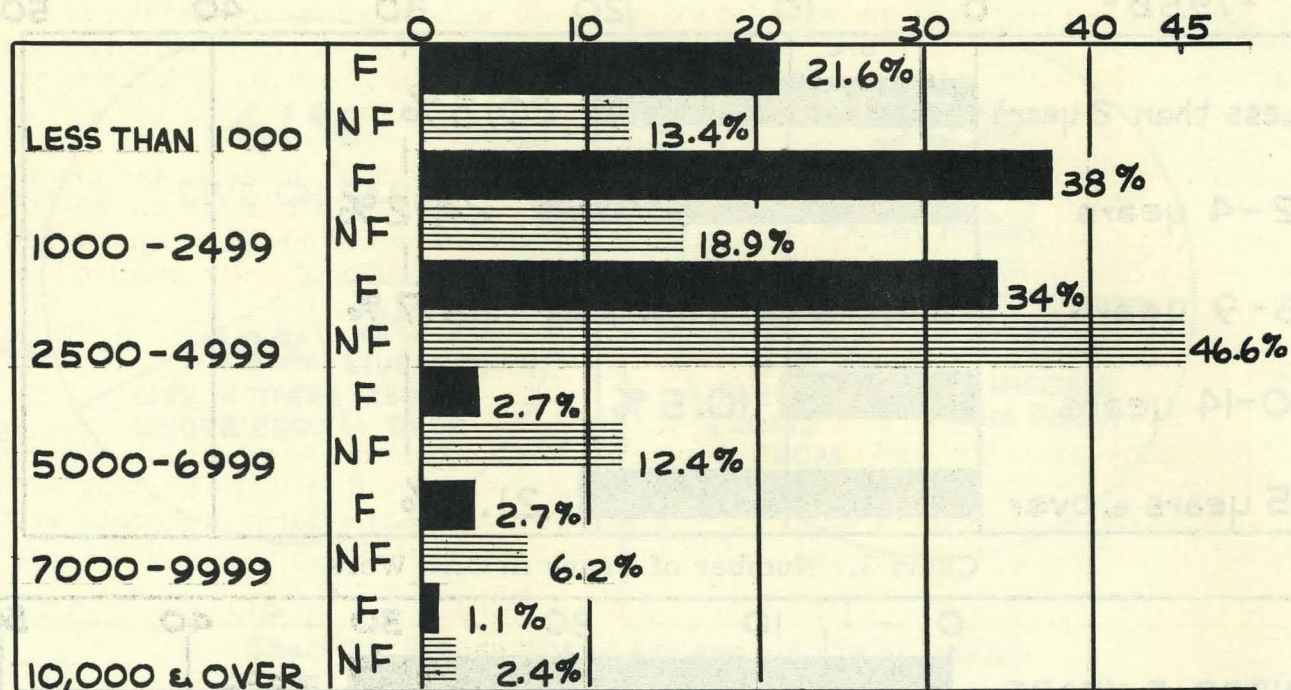


Chart 5. Net Annual Income

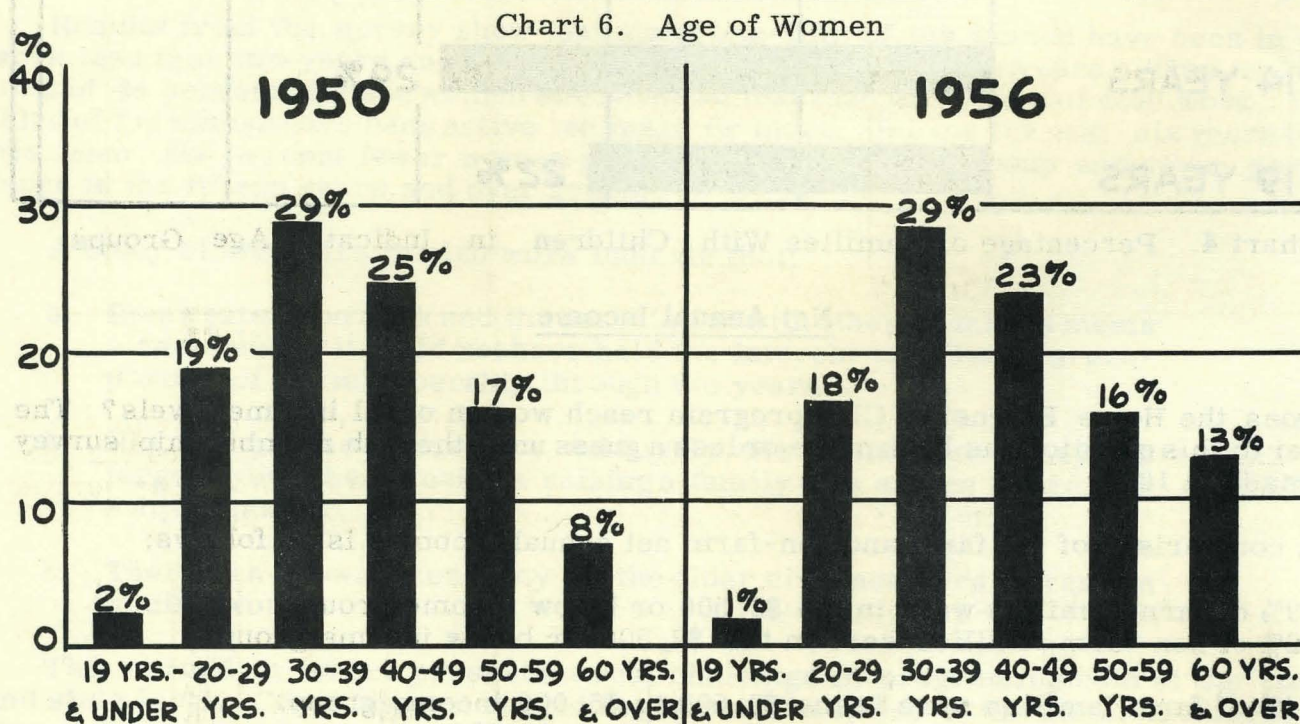


Chart 6. Age of Women

#### Age Of Women

During the six years, 1950-1956, the age groupings have made little change.

The young homemaker group is the smallest. The surveys show that few women join Home Extension Club when under 19 or 20 years of age, about six percent join between 20 to 24 years, and 12 percent, or twice as many, in their late twenties--24-29 years.



The fact that we are not reaching the younger set indicates that they have small children, do not feel at home with the experienced homemakers, or that the program does not appeal to them. A program or group adjustment should be considered where possible to help solve this problem. Every effort should be made to reach these young homemakers through special interest programs or meetings.

The largest age groups are the 30 to 39 years with about 30 percent, and the 40-49 with 23 percent. This makes a total of about two-thirds of the women in the 30-50 age group. After 50 the number drops sharply to 16 percent in the 50-59 age group and 13 percent in the 60 and over group. However, this last group of older women has increased 5 percent during the past six years.

### Work Away From Home

How many Home Extension Club members work outside the home full or part time was answered "yes" by 14 percent of them. As analysis of where these working women lived showed that 24 percent, or about one-fourth of rural non-farm and urban women worked as compared to seven percent of the farm membership.

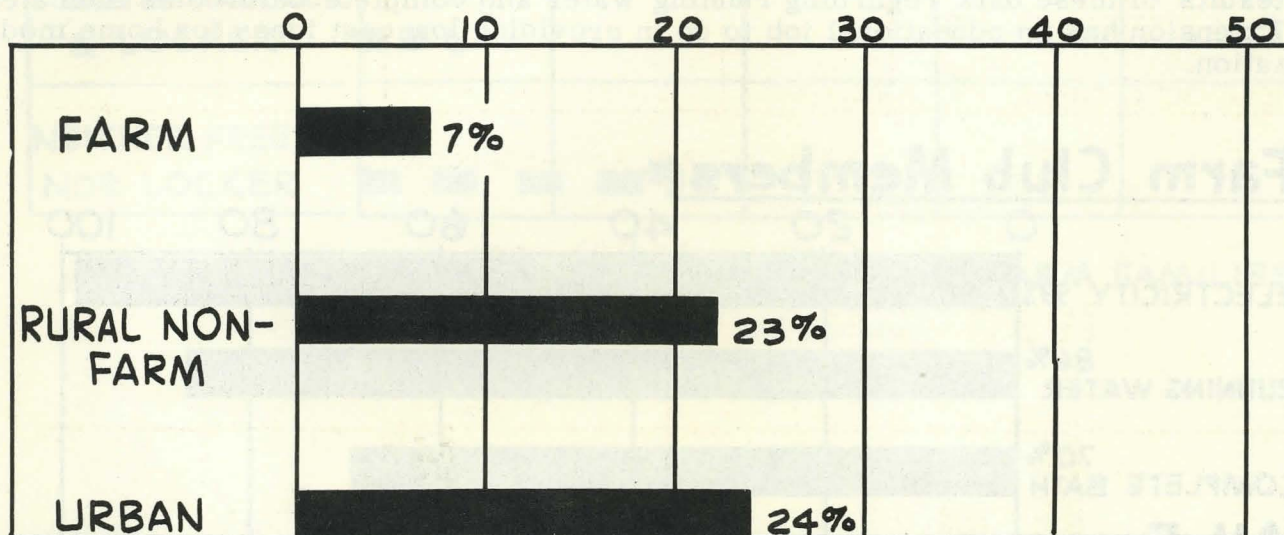


Chart 7. Work Away From Home  
Formal Education

A check on the formal education of the Home Extension Club membership shows that 71 percent had received a high school education or more. About one-third (32 percent) had some college training or were college graduates. Less than one percent had not finished the eighth grade and five percent were college graduates.

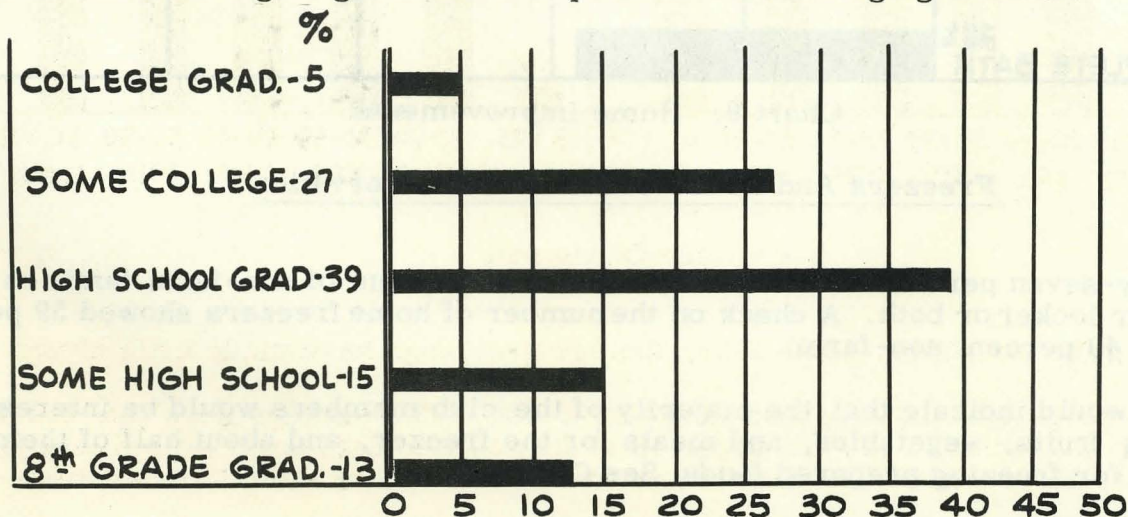


Chart 8. Formal Education



### Home Improvements

A comparison between census data for all Nebraska farm families and that obtained from the survey on farm Home Extension Club membership gave the following information of such major home modernization items as electricity, running water, and complete bath.

1. Nearly all farm families have electricity--99 percent of club members and 96 percent of all farm families.
2. About five-sixths, or 86 percent, of club members had running water compared to 69 percent of all farm families.
3. Seventy percent had complete baths as compared to 38 percent of all farm families.

Results of these data regarding running water and complete bathrooms indicates that Extension has an educational job to do in providing low cost ideas for home modernization.

#### **Farm Club Members \***

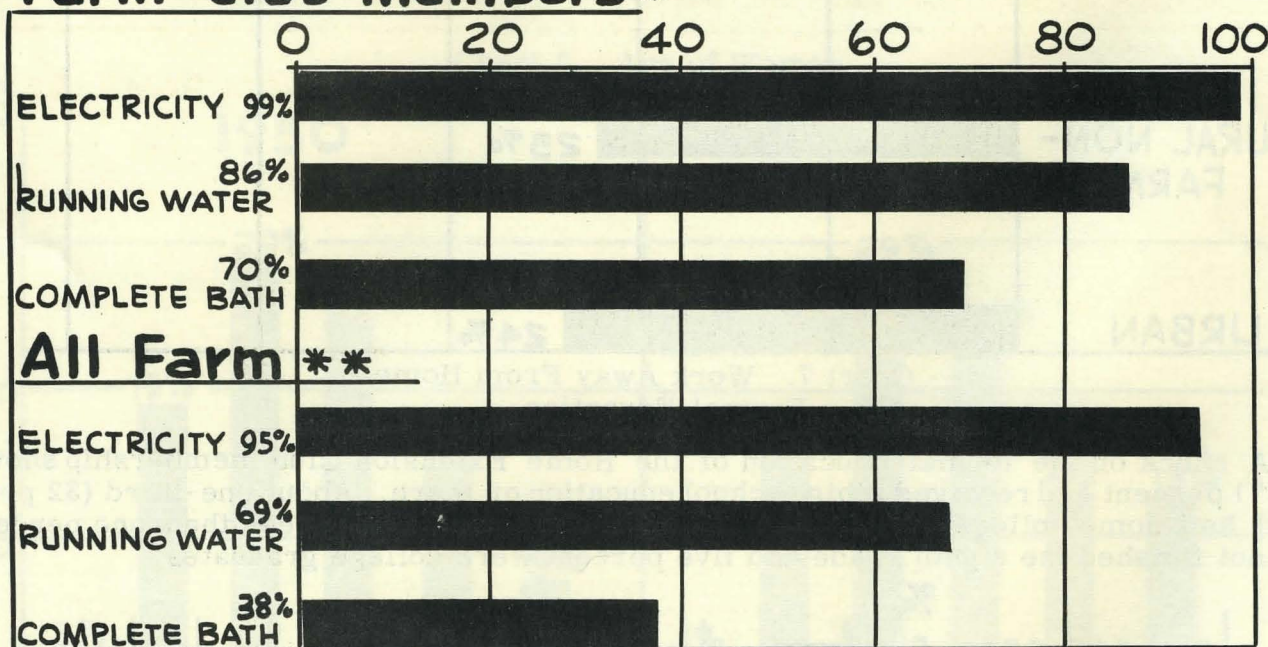


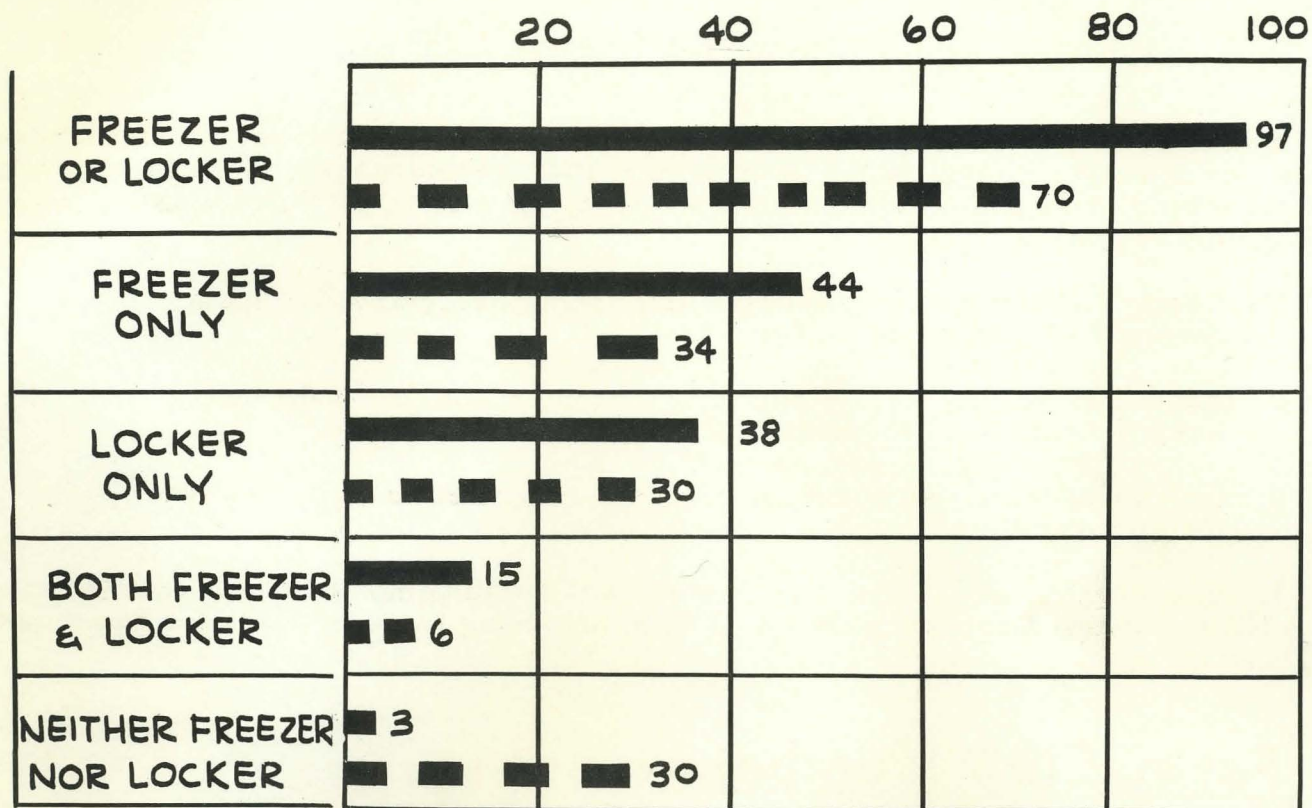
Chart 9. Home Improvements

### Freezers And Lockers For Food Preservation

Ninety-seven percent of farm families and 70 percent of non-farm families had a freezer or locker or both. A check on the number of home freezers showed 59 percent farm and 40 percent non-farm.

This would indicate that the majority of the club members would be interested in preparing fruits, vegetables, and meats for the freezer, and about half of them have facilities for freezing prepared foods. See Chart 10.





FARM FAMILIES
  NON-FARM FAMILIES

Chart 10. Freezers and Lockers