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Review of *Every Farm a Factory: The Industrial Ideal in American Agriculture* By Deborah Fitzgerald

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Every Farm a Factory: The Industrial Ideal in American Agriculture. By Deborah Fitzgerald. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003. xi + 242 pp. Photographs, appendix, notes, index. \$45.00 cloth.

In many ways Deborah Fitzgerald's *Every Farm a Factory* is a familiar story. Students of early twentieth-century American agriculture will find recognizable contours: mechanization, standardization, economies of scale, depopulation, professionalization, and a developing managerial mind-set. What makes Fitzgerald's work an invigorating contribution to the history of rural America is her framework. The new "opportunities and constraints" confronting farmers and their families in the 1920s, she argues, were not an accidental convergence.

The accouterments of modernity, although appearing to arrive piecemeal, were in actuality part of a complex web "link[ing] capital, raw materials, transportation networks, communication systems, and newly trained technical experts" into a structure both embraced and resisted by the nation's farmers. It was a system that Fitzgerald labels "an industrial logic or ideal." To understand American agriculture, including twenty-first century agribusiness, she contends, "it is essential to grasp the overarching logic of change that was taking place in bits and pieces and the industrial system that was being constructed across the country."

In well-crafted, engaging chapters, Fitzgerald fortifies her argument. She details the development of an industrial logic by the nation's demonstration agents, agricultural college professors, bankers and business leaders, among others, with this "logic function[ing] as a matrix of ideas, practices and relationships that persuaded farmers to change the way they did things." The changes delineated include the development of agricultural economics and engineering, with their resultant bookkeeping and mechanization, as well as mass-scale farm labor.

In her concluding chapters, Fitzgerald fulfills the promise of her theorizing with practice, specifically exploring the Campbell Farming Corporation of Montana and Soviet collectives. Substantiated via example, her argument becomes all the more persuasive. The chapters on Tom Campbell's 100,000-acre wheat farm, and the half-million-acre Soviet endeavor are worth the price of the volume.

It would have been worthwhile for Fitzgerald to comment at greater length upon those who felt endangered by the industrial ideal. Who peered into the future and found a troublesome reality in industrial agriculture? Surely some did, but they remain predominantly silent here. Similarly, one wonders about competing logics. Moreover, it is best to read this book with an atlas readily at hand; no maps are included.

Minor quibbles aside, *Every Farm a Factory* warrants our attention. Fitzgerald provides a compelling story, one that helps us understand the current state of American agriculture. **Kimberly K. Porter**, *Department of History, University of North Dakota*.