



Factors affecting compliance with the agricultural conservation program, Sheridan county, Montana
by Harvey W Miller

A THESIS Submitted to the Graduate Committee in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Master of Science In Agricultural Economics
Montana State University
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Abstract:

Certain forces obstruct the general adoption of desired soil conservation and land use practices and prevent the Agricultural Conservation Program from attaining its desired effectiveness.

The large proportion of renters in Sheridan county is not conducive to most effective participation in the federal conservation program. Renters adopted fewer soil building practices per mere and had a greater proportion of their cropland in cash crops and a lesser proportion in fallow and feed crops than either part owners or full owners. Renters had a smaller proportion of land classed as farming land and a greater proportion of land classed as grazing land than owners and part owners. Ranters had a lower ratio of land classed as farm land to cropland than owners and part owners.

The lease arrangement has a decided effect on the soil building and land use practices of renters. The crop-share arrangement which gave the landlord a greater share of the crop was most conducive to the adoption of soil building practices. The cash renters had a smaller proportion of their cropland in cash crops and a greater proportion in feed crops than crop-share renters. The acreage of cash crops increased as the share to the landlord increased.

Resident owners and lending agencies ranked highest as landlords most likely to encourage the adoption of conservation practices. Public agencies ranked the lowest. The resident landlords used the crop-share arrangement which returns the landlord one-half or more of the crop, while public agencies used the cash arrangement to a greater extent than other landlord groups.

The owner group had the smallest average else of operating unit. The 500 to 739 acre farm else group had the most desirable land use and conservation practices, with a large proportion of the farms in this group tending to have about 640 acres. Farm else groups of lees than 400 acres had fewer soil building practices than larger farm else groups. Farms of less than 100 acres had adopted no soil building practices acceptable to the Agricultural Conservation Program, and had no fallow acres.

Problems of participation in the conservation program arise from mortgage indebtedness, credit, and income conditions which appear to be significant obstructions to the general adoption of desired conservation practices.

The elimination of certain undesirable features of tenancy, the promotion of more desirable leasing arrangements, the establishment of more economical farm size units and a credit policy aimed at reducing the burden of mortgage Indebtedness and extending more liberal credit when needed to carry out conservation practices appear necessary in order to promote the more general adoption of desired land use end conservation practices and increase the effectiveness of the present Agricultural Conservation Program.

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SHERIDAN COUNTY, MONTANA, 1938

by

Harvey W. Miller

A THESIS

Submitted to the Graduate Committee
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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FOREWORD

"The Conservation movement is nothing less than the guidance of American civilization in the transition from its pioneer youth of shortsighted exploitation to the productive maturity of statesmanlike development."

.....Glenn Frank

ABSTRACT

Certain forces obstruct the general adoption of desired soil conservation and land use practices and prevent the Agricultural Conservation Program from attaining its desired effectiveness.

The large proportion of renters in Sheridan county is not conducive to most effective participation in the federal conservation program. Renters adopted fewer soil building practices per acre and had a greater proportion of their cropland in cash crops and a lesser proportion in fallow and feed crops than either part owners or full owners. Renters had a smaller proportion of land classed as farming land and a greater proportion of land classed as grazing land than owners and part owners. Renters had a lower ratio of land classed as farm land to cropland than owners and part owners.

The lease arrangement has a decided effect on the soil building and land use practices of renters. The crop-share arrangement which gave the landlord a greater share of the crop was most conducive to the adoption of soil building practices. The cash renters had a smaller proportion of their cropland in cash crops and a greater proportion in feed crops than crop-share renters. The acreage of cash crops increased as the share to the landlord increased.

Resident owners and lending agencies ranked highest as landlords most likely to encourage the adoption of conservation practices. Public agencies ranked the lowest. The resident landlords used the crop-share arrangement which returns the landlord one-half or more of the crop, while public agencies used the cash arrangement to a greater extent than other landlord groups.

The owner group had the smallest average size of operating unit. The 500 to 799 acre farm size group had the most desirable land use and conservation practices, with a large proportion of the farms in this group tending to have about 640 acres. Farm size groups of less than 400 acres had fewer soil building practices than larger farm size groups. Farms of less than 100 acres had adopted no soil building practices acceptable to the Agricultural Conservation Program, and had no fallow acres.

Problems of participation in the conservation program arise from mortgage indebtedness, credit, and income conditions which appear to be significant obstructions to the general adoption of desired conservation practices.

The elimination of certain undesirable features of tenancy, the promotion of more desirable leasing arrangements, the establishment of more economical farm size units and a credit policy aimed at reducing the burden of mortgage indebtedness and extending more liberal credit when needed to carry out conservation practices appear necessary in order to promote the more general adoption of desired land use and conservation practices and increase the effectiveness of the present Agricultural Conservation Program.

