
This book is likely to become popular for a number of reasons, among them the following: (1) it is well integrated, (2) it covers the "field" of agricultural economics, (3) the statistical information is current and, (4) issues are set out in bold relief. These are important attributes of a good textbook. It appears to be best adapted to serve as a basis for a survey course in agricultural economics following the general course in principles.

Wilcox and Cochrane begin with principles of resource allocation and production problems for the individual firm. This is followed by a discussion of institutional aspects of land as a factor of production under the general heading of problems in acquiring and managing land. A thorough description of the marketing system then serves as an introduction to an analysis of farm prices, the section on price analysis being one of the strongest in the book. After the analysis of markets and farm prices, the authors introduce the student to the relationship of the farmer to other sectors of the domestic economy and to world markets. The concluding chapters on agricultural policy depict the growth of government in agriculture and the evolution of the more important programs in the field of agricultural policy.

Early in the book it becomes apparent that the authors are more concerned about raising issues than they are about providing answers in neat packages. They point out that it may be necessary to assign outside readings both in theory and in statistical supplements to round out any particular discussion. Due to the broad scope of the work this need will arise frequently.

The effect of this approach is that the alert student will find himself out on a limb grasping for answers which are not readily available. For example, in an apparently innocent discussion of how types of farming become established, the point is made that farm output has expanded faster than population growth since the stabilization of cropland acreage in 1920. This is followed by the bald statement that production specialists expect this situation to continue indefinitely into the future (p. 26). Many, of course, will not accept this conclusion.

A similar result is produced in a chapter on farm tenancy problems. The statement is made that "it is only when demand gets badly out of adjustment with the supply that changes are made in prevailing rental shares" (p. 147). This produces the conclusion that "if one views rental rates as the competitive price for the use of these resources, he will avoid the futility of trying to determine 'fair rates' in an ever changing market" (p. 148). This is indeed a shallow burial for an obstreperous issue, much too shallow for the comfort of this reviewer.

Part III, "Marketing farm products in an interdependent economy" is
a description of marketing channels and commodity problems. Its contents, with the exception of one chapter, are determined largely by the question, "Does distribution cost too much?" The exception is a misplaced chapter on consumer demand in relation to income distribution patterns. This discussion belongs in Part IV which is a lucid construction of farm prices and an equally clear portrayal of the role prices play in guiding allocation of resources of the agricultural firm. The authors then take a broad look at what lies ahead as far as food production and population trends are concerned. They predict food and fibre shortages if war comes; surpluses if peace is restored. This section (Section V) raises the broader issues which prompt any serious study of the economics of American agriculture.

Finally the last section, Part VI, "What government aids do farmers need?" does not answer the question raised. Instead it contains a survey of the views of the various schools of thought on the subject and concludes with a plea for a reorientation of our thinking. The "new look" is necessary because "we are faced with the prospect of food and fibre shortages in the United States and in the world of its allies for an indefinite period." (p. 582) The optimism of the concluding sentence on page 26, referred to above, is thus gone and the reader is left to steer his course with a series of penetrating questions arising from the realization that the economics of American agriculture will be increasingly affected by world-wide conflicts.

The approach of this book will be stimulating to most readers. With few exceptions the work is penetrating and complete. There seems little doubt, however, that its use will be limited to those colleges and universities which expose their students to a general course in principles before offering them a course in the economics of agriculture. In the opinion of this reviewer the authors selected their level of presentation wisely in that it permitted them to do an effective job.

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Without doubt the first sentence in this publication is the most misleading in the book: "The Soil Survey Manual is intended for use by soil scientists engaged in soil classification and mapping." It is unfortunate that others are thus discouraged from reading a discussion that reflects so broad an outlook on agriculture and agricultural research methods and so firm a grasp of how the quantitative and the qualitative, measurements and judgements, must be woven together in an evolving continuum for the attainment of complex understandings. The Manual is intended pri-