

6. *Prospective changes in program orientation*

a. See answers under programs for Unemployment Insurance and Minimum Wage. (The increased public interest in problems related to agricultural workers is reflected in a number of legislative proposals. These are listed here for information purposes and not as an indication of Labor Department endorsement. They include: S. 1866, 1868, 1869 and 1991, H.R. 972, 973, 2436, 2437, 7486, 8109, 8282, 8655, 9266, 9283, and 9285—all in the 89th Congress.)

b. None at present, however, see 6(c) below.

c. By 1970 American agricultural production and employment will be concentrated in fewer, larger establishments. This trend has been clearly evident in the past and is expected to continue; In 1959, commercial farms with sales in excess of \$10,000 accounted for 75 percent of total sales although these farms constituted less than 35 percent of all commercial producers. The displacement of farm operators and their families—from 1950 to 1960 the number of farms in the United States dropped from 5.4 million to 3.7 million—will continue with fewer but larger farms accounting for almost all agricultural production.

Average monthly agricultural hired worker employment will be about 1.2 million. In 1964, it was estimated at 1.6 million, a drop of about 10 percent from 1963. For the first nine months of 1965, employment averaged about 7 percent less than in 1964. The continuation of the present rate of decline would bring employment down to about one million by 1970. It is assumed that this trend will moderate so that employment in 1970 will be only about 25 percent less than in 1964.

Industrial farming—or agribusiness—built on heavy capitalization and extensive use of technological innovations is thus becoming increasingly characteristic of American agriculture. This development is bringing material changes in types and numbers of workers needed. Increasing dependence on machinery reflects only one aspect of these changes. Chemical, biological, financial, and management innovations are equally important.

At the present time, the entire cotton harvest is largely mechanized. Such other major labor-using harvest activities as tobacco, cannery tomatoes, apples, lettuce and other vegetables, and citrus are on the threshold of significant breakthroughs in mechanization. Preharvest activities are also being affected by the increased use of herbicides, improved seed, fertilizers, and cultivation techniques—all of which reduces seasonal labor demands.

Although there is, and will continue to be increased dependence on specialized and technically skilled workers, demand for seasonal workers at the peak of the harvest will not diminish significantly in some crops. Total man-months of employment for these types of workers, however, will be much less because they will be working for shorter periods.