

(12) Provision for public recreation centers, Boy Scout troops, and similar facilities for enriching the lives of the inhabitants is proportioned in the two communities in the same general way, favoring the small-farm community.

(13) The small-farm community supports two newspapers, each with many times the news space carried in the single paper of the industrialized-farm community.

(14) Churches bear the ratio of 2:1 between the communities, with the greater number of churches and churchgoers in the small-farm community.

(15) Facilities for making decisions on community welfare through local popular elections are available to people in the small-farm community; in the large-farm community such decisions are in the hands of officials of the county.

These differences are sufficiently great in number and degree to affirm the thesis that small farms bear a very important relation to the character of American rural society. It must be realized that the two communities of Arvin and Dinuba were carefully selected to reflect the difference in size of enterprise, and not extraneous factors. The agricultural production in the two communities was virtually the same in volume—2½ million dollars per annum in each—so that the resource base was strictly comparable. Both communities produce specialized crops of high value and high cost of production, utilizing irrigation and large bodies of special harvest labor. The two communities are in the same climate zone, about equidistant from small cities and major urban centers, similarly served by highways and railroads, and without any significant advantages from nonagricultural resources or from manufacturing or processing. The reported differences in the communities may properly be assigned confidently and overwhelmingly to the scale-of-farming factor.

The reasons seem clear. The small-farm community is a population of middle-class persons with a high degree of stability in income and tenure, and a strong economic and social interest in their community. Differences in wealth among them are not great, and the people generally associate together in those organizations which serve the community. Where farms are large, on the other hand, the population consists of relatively few persons with economic stability, and of large numbers whose only tie to the community is their uncertain and relatively low-income job. Differences in wealth are great among members of this community, and social contacts between them are rare.

Indeed, even the operators of large-scale farms frequently are absentees; and if they do live in Arvin, they as often seek their recreation in the nearby city. Their interest in the social life of the community is hardly greater than that of the laborer whose tenure is transitory. Even the businessmen of the large-farm community frequently express their own feelings of impermanence; and their financial investment in the community, kept usually at a minimum reflects the same view. Attitudes such as these are not conducive to stability and the rich kind of rural community life which is properly associated with the traditional family farm.

[From Omaha World-Herald, May 17, 1968]

RFD—CORPORATION FARM EFFECT AN OLD TOPIC

Corporation farming and the entry of non-farm interests into agriculture is a hot subject, but it isn't exactly new.

Nearly a quarter of a century ago, on December 23, 1946, to be exact, a special Senate subcommittee issued a report on the effects of large farm operations on small business and the community.

And this report essentially embraces the arguments the National Farmers Union and others are emphasizing in leading the fight against corporation farming.

Senator Gaylord Nelson (Dem., Wis.), who will conduct the first of a series of field hearings on corporation farming in Omaha Monday, has read into the Congressional Record the 1946 report.

TOWNS STUDIED

The report was the sociological study of two California towns (one in a family farm area and the other surrounded by corporation-type farms) and came up with the following findings: