1942

Louisiana farm laborers and total war

Harold Charles Hoffsommer

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/agexp

Recommended Citation
Hoffsommer, Harold Charles, "Louisiana farm laborers and total war" (1942). LSU Agricultural Experiment Station Reports. 497.
http://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/agexp/497

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the LSU AgCenter at LSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in LSU Agricultural Experiment Station Reports by an authorized administrator of LSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact gcoste1@lsu.edu.
Louisiana Farm Laborers And Total War

By
HAROLD HOFFSOMMER
AND
RALPH J. RAMSEY

In Cooperation with the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, United States Department of Agriculture

Neighbor cooperation such as this in rice threshing will help solve the farm labor problem

LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY
AND
AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANICAL COLLEGE
AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATIONS
W. G. TAGGART, Director
CONTENTS

FARM LABOR AND THE WAR EFFORT ............................................ 3

THE LOUISIANA FARMER’S PART .............................................. 3
   Increased crop acreages .................................................. 3
   Men for the armed forces and war production ..................... 4

WAR TIME DEMAND FOR FARM LABORERS ................................ 4
   Labor needs for additional crops ...................................... 4
   Seasonal nature of Louisiana’s farm labor demand ............... 4
   Total demand for 1942 .................................................. 5

THE SUPPLY OF FARM LABORERS .......................................... 7
   Efficient use of manpower ............................................... 7
   The number of laborers available ..................................... 9
   Summary of supply situation .......................................... 9

SPECIAL LABOR PROBLEMS BY AREAS ..................................... 11
   Plantation ........................................................................ 11
   Sugar and Rice .................................................................. 11
   General Farming .................................................................. 13
   Owner Operator .................................................................. 13
   Labor Reservoir .................................................................. 13

PUBLIC AGENCIES AND FARM LABOR ..................................... 14
   United States Employment Service .................................... 14
   Work Projects Administration .......................................... 15
   Farm Security Administration .......................................... 15

INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY EFFORT .................................... 16
   Individual effort .............................................................. 16
   Neighborhood and community effort .................................. 16
   Existing organizations through which labor problems may be attacked locally ....... 17
Louisiana Farm Laborers and Total War

Harold Hoffsommer and Ralph J. Ramsey

Farm Labor and the War Effort

It is not enough to say that our nation is engaged in a war. It is engaged in a total war. This means that every physical and human resource must be fitted into the niche where it can be of most service in winning the ultimate victory. Agriculture is obviously an important link in the victory chain. Secretary of Agriculture Wickard has said that “food will win the war, and write the peace.” Despite the mechanization of warfare, armies still “march on their stomachs” and likewise it may be added, food greatly conditions the civilian morale and strength of the nations. American agriculture is charged with providing food and fiber not only for our own army and civilian population but with furnishing substantial supplies to our allies as well. Can agriculture meet the challenge?

Louisiana farmers are pledged to increases in production. At the same time they are faced with restrictions on machinery, fertilizer, seeds and other essential materials over which they have little control. Even more serious is the problem of labor which lies at the very root of all production. Fortunately, the opportunities for meeting the labor difficulties are more within the control of the farmer than the opportunities for surmounting the other handicaps mentioned. Heretofore, labor supply has not been a serious problem but now new elements have entered the picture. The demand placed upon Louisiana agriculture cannot be met without serious planning and intelligent extension of effort. Probably the most crucial phase of this planning concerns the utilization of agricultural manpower.

The Louisiana Farmers' Part

Increased crop acreages

In addition to the 1941 crop acreages and livestock productions, Louisiana farmers have been asked and have pledged themselves to produce 103,000 acres of soybeans, 50,000 acres of peanuts, 55,000 acres of rice, 5,000 acres of home garden, 2,000 milk cows, 28,000 beef cattle, 10,000 hogs, and 3,000,000 dozen eggs. Over and above these acreages an undefined additional acreage of feed crops will be required to care for the increases in livestock and poultry.

1 Cooperative Agent with the Bureau of Agricultural Economics.
Additional acres require additional laborers. But that is not all. On the basis of a national armed force of six million, it is estimated that Louisiana will be called upon to supply 105,000 men, something like 65,000 of which will be drawn from rural areas. This represents only a part of the war need since probably another 50,000 will be needed to work in industries directly concerned with war production, roughly one-half of which must come from rural areas. In all, therefore, an estimated total of 90,000 will be drawn from Louisiana’s rural population for war purposes. This is probably a conservative figure in view of the demand for laborers in private industries stimulated by war production activities. This indirect labor demand has been variously estimated, but for the United States as a whole the Committee on Labor of the Twentieth Century Fund estimates that for every new or unemployed worker added to the defense industries an additional person is added to non-defense employment. On this basis another 25,000 should be added to the 90,000 lost for agricultural work indicated above. Although the total drain on the agricultural labor supply from these various causes cannot be estimated with certainty, the above figures give ample evidence that Louisiana farmers are faced with problems which will demand their most serious attention.

**War Time Demand for Farm Laborers**

*Labor needs for additional crops*

In the “food for freedom” program, acreages for which have already been given, it is estimated that to plant, tend and harvest the various crops and to care for the extra livestock and poultry will require an increase of 2 million man days of labor of 10 hours each.1 In view of the other demands at this time, will there be a sufficient number of farm laborers available to reach the production goals? The final answer to this question must be given in terms of months and local areas. But before proceeding with this analysis, the major problems can be considerably clarified by several statewide observations.

*Seasonal nature of Louisiana’s farm labor demand*

Unfortunately, there are already two “bottlenecks” in the Louisiana farm labor situation: the first is that of satisfying peak season labor de-

---

1 Estimates of labor requirements are based on studies made by the Department of Agricultural Economics, Louisiana State University, on labor actually expended for each crop and livestock enterprise by operation and by months. Although the estimates are not strictly applicable throughout the state due to differences in yields, degree of mechanization and methods of production, the variations for the purposes at hand, are not significant. Average weather conditions and yields are assumed for 1942. The term man month is used to represent the equivalent of one man working 22 days of 10 hours each. It is realized that due to weather conditions and the lack of volume of work there will be many days of less than 10 hours and many months of only 10 or 15 days. The calculations are made on the basis of the maximum amount of work possible under ideal conditions.
mands; the second, no less important, is the problem of efficiently using the available man power during the normally slack agricultural seasons. As the matter now stands, the Louisiana demand for farm laborers is highly seasonal. The food for freedom products to be produced in 1942 require a more steady labor supply throughout the year than the crops already under production. Although these additional crops will add somewhat to the peak labor demands, they use a relatively large number of laborers in what are now the off seasons and in this way tend to make more efficient use of the total labor power.

It is, of course, obvious that the production of certain agricultural items demands a more continuous and less seasonal labor force than others. Conspicuous among those utilizing year around labor are livestock and poultry. Sugar cane, rice and hay (including soybeans and peanuts), particularly when combined with other crops, show a fairly steady labor demand throughout the year. Cotton, Louisiana's dominant crop, unfortunately presents a highly seasonal demand. Rice harvesting presents a slight peak in August and September and cane harvesting and planting during October, November and December. These peak demands are largely localized and present no statewide problem excepting that the rice harvest conflicts with cotton picking. Strawberry and commercial vegetable production is also localized.

The planting and cultivating of cotton, corn and vegetables from March to June and cotton picking in August and September represent the greatest demands for labor. Although cotton is usually picked over a two months period, the season can be extended to four with only a slight decrease in the quality of lint and a reduced viability of seed.\(^1\)

The production of strawberries, cane, and rice are restricted to clearly defined parts of the State and during the harvest season for these crops there are not enough workers living on local farms to do the job. Likewise, if no outside labor came into some of the Delta parishes each operator, tenant, wage laborer and family laborer reported in the 1940 census would be charged under normal yields with picking an average of 9,000 pounds of seed cotton.

The assignment per worker for planting and cultivating corn and cotton runs as high as 19 acres in some parishes of the same area. At the same time these persons must also do other necessary farm work with livestock and crops. It is quite evident that non-resident labor must be used in these areas to get the work done during the peak seasons.

**Total demand for 1942**

Probably the best conception of the total farm labor demand for the State for 1942 can be gotten by studying Figure 1, "Louisiana Agricultural Labor Needs Estimated by Months for 1942."\(^1\) (See also Table I

---

\(^1\) C. B. Doyle, "Climate and Cotton" *1941 Yearbook of Agriculture*, has stated that deterioration begins from three to five weeks after the opening of the bolls which in a Texas study resulted in a 4 per cent loss in grade of lint after four weeks exposure.
The extreme variation shows inefficient use of manpower and makes it hard to keep laborers on the farm since most of them cannot be offered year around employment.
Several general observations may be made: (1) May is the month with greatest labor demand with an estimated need for 275,000 workers. Only a small part of this total (12,000 workers or 4 per cent) is occasioned by the food for freedom crops. (2) The next highest demands are for April with a need for 263,000 laborers and September with a need for 245,000. (3) The months of least labor demand are January and July with 93,000 and 45,000 respectively. These months have only about one-fifth of the demand in May. (4) The labor demand for the food for freedom crops is relatively more evenly distributed through the year than that for the bulk of the crops already grown. (5) The peak seasons of the various crops come at different times, thus permitting the movement of laborers between areas such as for example the sugar and rice areas.

The figures given above are based upon 22 days per month of 10 hours each for crops and 30 days per month of 10 hours each for livestock. Due to weather conditions it is usually not possible to work in the field as many as 22 days in every month. Figure 2 indicates the manpower needed in 1942 under normal and ideal weather conditions.¹

The Supply of Farm Laborers

Efficient use of manpower

The satisfaction of the peak labor demands is obviously crucial if the production goals are to be reached. But of equal or even greater importance in the long run is the efficient use of agricultural manpower during periods of slack agricultural employment.

The number of workers available for agriculture depends upon the real need and the wage rate as compared with industrial work. Ordinarily the agricultural labor supply consists of the farm operators, their families and the wage laborers living on farms. However, if a valuable crop is in danger of being lost before it can be harvested, persons living in nearby towns and cities might well be included. During the past few years increasing numbers of farm laborers, particularly those who furnish a great deal of the seasonal labor, have moved from the farms into villages and cities. The 1940 census shows that of those men living in urban areas roughly 4 per cent gave farming as their major occupation. Added to those are many farm workers living in villages with less than 2,500 population which the census does not count as urban. Under these circum-

¹ The estimates given are for production of crops and livestock and do not include time spent in repairing fences, buildings, or equipment, and cleaning out ditches. Approximately 12 days each year are required to provide wood for each family's fuel needs. Work of this kind is usually done during the slack seasons so that the actual number of days work each month per person would show a slightly different distribution than that indicated by the chart.

² These data are based on a 5 year study for cotton and corn production in the delta area of the Mississippi. See E. L. Langsford and B. H. Thibodeaux, Plantation Organization and Operation in the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Area, U.S.D.A. Tech. Bull. 682, May, 1939; p. 44, Fig. 8.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Production</th>
<th>January</th>
<th>February</th>
<th>March</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>June</th>
<th>July</th>
<th>August</th>
<th>September</th>
<th>October</th>
<th>November</th>
<th>December</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Types</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corn</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cane</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strawberries</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables and Orchards</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hay and Miscellaneous</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livestock and Poultry</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Estimates are based on average weather conditions and average yields as follows: Corn, 15 bu. per acre; Cane, 20 tons per acre; Seed cotton, 700 lbs. per acre. The acreages assumed for the principal crops are: Cotton, 1,160,000; Corn, 1,550,000; Rice, 603,000; Sugar Cane, 280,000; Strawberries, 20,000; Vegetable and Orchard, 274,000; Hay, 889,000. The number of laborers is based on a 22 day month of 10 hours each for crops and a 30 day month for livestock.
stances the farm operator is forced to recruit many of his seasonal laborers from nearby centers. But with increasing chances for full time jobs in industry, the farm laborers are becoming more difficult to get. Then too, the wage differential is against the farmer, particularly since he is not in a position to offer year around employment for all those he needs at the peak seasons. With the need for manpower in the present emergency it is obviously necessary to furnish employment for every worker as nearly 12 months in the year as possible. If this cannot be done in agriculture it is most likely that industry, particularly as accelerated in the present emergency, will continue to draw these workers from the farm.

The number of laborers available

A total of 564,000 persons over 14 years of age were enumerated in the census of April, 1940, as living on farms. Of these, 33,000 were unable to work because of old age and physical or mental handicaps. An additional 54,000 were in school and 181,000 gave their usual occupation as housewife, many of whom could be and were being utilized to a limited extent during the rush seasons. With these deductions there are left 290,000 persons capable of full time work. To carry the analysis a step further, when the estimated loss of labor to the armed forces and industry is accounted for, the labor force remaining on farms in 1942 will be approximately 165,000 men and 35,000 women or a total of 200,000. Since most of those leaving the farm are from 18 to 35 years of age, those remaining will not be capable of doing as much work as those leaving the farm.

Towns and cities supplied 14,000 wage laborers, according to the 1940 census of occupations, who gave farming as their usual occupation. It is known that many more than this number worked on farms during the rush seasons being unable to secure full employment at their place of residence. Since these workers are also relatively young and are therefore most affected by the Selective Service and the call to industry, the number available during the emergency will probably be less than half the former number.

Regardless of the theoretical supply or the actual needs, there were 470,000 persons who worked 2 or more days during the last week of September, 1939, as reported in the 1940 census. In 1942, about 23,000 more laborers will be needed and something like 130,000 of those who worked in 1939 will not be available. There is no accurate measure of how many school children over 14 years of age or housewives were included in the 470,000 so it would not be correct to say that all school children and housewives could be added to the labor force. Of the total workers there were about 224,000 family workers and the total of boys in school and all women was only 279,000. It appears that these sources of labor were being utilized in 1939 fairly well.

Summary of supply situation

1. A 5 per cent increase in labor needs takes place at the same time as an approximate loss of 25 per cent of the normal labor supply.
Under the best possible conditions considerably fewer workers are needed, particularly during the harvest seasons, than under average or normal conditions.
2. With "business as usual" few new individuals can be introduced into the farm labor market.

3. The solution must be a more intensive use of the normal labor force remaining.

4. Under extreme conditions all available able-bodied town and city dwellers will be needed for a short harvest season.

**Special Labor Problems by Areas**

For a consideration of farm labor problems the State is divided into five areas. (Figure 3) The chief factor involved in determining the areas was the relationship between the supply and demand for farm labor with various skills. To determine this relationship consideration was given to: crop and livestock combinations, the total and seasonal labor demands for each enterprise, extent of shifts in combinations of enterprises, loss of labor to the armed forces and war industries, dependency upon non-resident labor during rush seasons, managerial abilities and skills of operators and laborers as they apply to shifts in agricultural production and the opportunities for work in war industries.¹

**Plantation**

Most of the workers in this area are croppers and wage laborers. If normal conditions prevail the resident workers will not be able to care for the planting and cultivating of corn and cotton nor the picking of cotton. On the other hand from October to March the labor force in the area is not used to any great extent. The Selective Service and the pull of higher wages in town will be felt less in this area than in other parts of the State because of deferments for dependents.

There has been a demand for unskilled labor in the Minden, the Alexandria and the Leesville areas but in the long run only skilled and semi-skilled workers will be desired. This area has a larger number of workers with no garden, chickens or cow which require chore work of one or two hours every day. With no chore work it is possible for these workers to go elsewhere to work. The situation of little or no work from October to March as contrasted to needs impossible to meet in April, May, September and October, will be remedied to some extent because of the increases planned for soybeans and livestock production.

**Sugar and Rice**

The labor needs of these two areas supplement each other in that the peak for the cane harvest immediately follows the rice harvest season. The production of rice has been increased 10 per cent which can be handled very easily except during the harvest season. The acreage in sugar cane

---
¹ This area delineation was determined to a considerable extent by previous work of the authors as reported in the publication, *Farm Tenancy in Louisiana*, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., 1941.
for the next few years will depend upon how much sugar can be moved in from Cuba and other countries. In all probability the acreage will be increased by about 50 per cent if the emergency continues. The increase will not be particularly great during 1942, however. With normal yields and weather conditions in 1942, the Lake Charles rice area and the cane areas will be able to care for their needs because of the increase in the number of mechanical cane cutters and other machinery used in the two areas. Except for strawberry pickers, very little of the resident labor is available to go into other areas for two reasons: the labor needs of the areas are rather evenly scattered throughout the year, and both farm operators and laborers have gardens, cows and chickens which call for chore labor. Livestock is an important part of farming in the rice area and it is becoming more important in the cane area.

**General Farming**

Although a diversity of crops are grown and the labor needs are rather constant from month to month, and chore labor is highest for the State, this area offers the best source of farm labor for other areas of any part of the State. The effect of Selective Service and defense industries will be less than in rice, cane or upland cotton areas. Unpaid family labor is very high and farmers stay on the same farm or in the community most of their lives. These factors suggest that the people are good at farming but have had little experience or desire to work at other occupations, that they can and will work together within a family or community to conserve labor which will allow many of the workers to go to other areas during rush seasons.

**Owner Operator**

The farmers of this area will have greatest difficulty in meeting the production goals for which they are committed. Some of the goals are very high particularly in Vernon and Washington parishes. Selective Service will have a greater effect on the farm people of this area than any other in the State. Also unskilled work during the past few years near Alexandria, Leesville, and Minden has given farmers a taste of high cash wages. The low yield of cotton in the northwestern part of the State in 1941 sent many farmers to industrial work in the fall and winter of that year and some opportunities for unskilled labor will remain. The area around Lake Pontchartrain has become dotted with numerous small industries in the past two years. Farmers in these areas may work their own farms or work at industrial work and do some farming but an opportunity for high wages will make it difficult to get many wage workers in agriculture at less than $3.00 per day.

**Labor Reservoir**

The large urban centers and numerous smaller centers represent a labor reservoir for farm labor during rush seasons. Fair wages and a change of scenery will stimulate the movement of unemployed and under-
employed industrial and service workers to go to the cane field, the cotton field or the berry field during the months of greatest need.

**Public Agencies and Farm Labor**

Several agencies have been set up which can be extremely useful to the farmer in solving his particular labor problems. It should be clear however that farm labor problems must eventually be solved by the farmers themselves. The agencies are available to assist free of charge but they cannot function properly unless individual farmers in need of labor present their problems to the agencies.¹

**United States Employment Service**

A. *General purpose:* To serve all types of workers and employers by bringing the worker and the job together by the most direct route possible

B. *How it aids the farmer:* The program aims at an orderly distribution of laborers so that:

1. each operator will have the proper number of workers when he needs them to do his work
2. workers will get employment if it is available
3. a standardized wage rate will be established thus eliminating friction between farm operators by moving laborers on the basis of where they are needed rather than on the basis of differential wage rates
4. areas of shortages or oversupply of labor can be determined in advance so that the laborers can be directed accordingly.

C. *How the farm operator can use this service:*

1. submit a request for workers to the nearest employment office
2. cooperate with the farm placement supervisor from this office when he visits his farm by giving him information on:
   a. the number of workers needed
   b. the time required to complete the work
   c. the rate of pay
   d. the housing facilities available
   e. how workers will be transported
3. following this, the farm operator will receive notice from the Farm Placement Supervisor that the requested number of workers, provided they are available, will be at the given location on the given day.

¹For a complete guide to governmental agencies see, *United States Government Manual*, Spring Issue, 1942, 698 pages. (For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C., 75 cents per copy.)
D. *How the farm wage worker can use this service:*

1. register in the nearest employment office
2. keep in touch with office as directed so that he can be called at a later date for employment in case none is available when he registers
3. after suitable job is found, follow instructions given by employment office as to place and time to report to work.

In case of a disagreement as to the conditions of work, both operator and workers are revisited and the situation explained so that when the workers report for work both parties are agreed as to all the conditions of work. Under the present emergency measures cooperation with the United States Employment Service is as yet voluntary for both workers and employers, but its effectiveness is obviously dependent to a considerable extent by the volume of applications which it handles. Its personnel has been greatly expanded for the emergency period to promote the war effort and it appears that only through such a labor agency can agriculture make full use of its manpower.

*Work Projects Administration*

Although not set up specifically as a labor agency, the work of the Work Projects Administration has a distinct relation to farm labor problems. Its general purpose is to provide work for employable persons unable to secure private employment. It aids the farmer in two ways: (1) by providing a local reservoir of labor to meet peak season demands and (2) by providing work for laborers during the slack seasons thereby increasing their yearly income and keeping them in the community for work when needed.

The farm operator can use this service by submitting his labor request to the nearest United States Employment Service office. The desired laborers, provided they are on the W.P.A. rolls, will then be released and supplied to the employer. The assignment to any given farm is handled entirely through the Employment Service and not through the W.P.A. itself. Upon satisfactory completion of such work these laborers are given priority for reemployment with the W.P.A. provided no private employment is available. It should be pointed out, however, that usually only a relatively small percentage of those on the W.P.A. rolls at any given time are farm workers; hence, the number of laborers which may be obtained from this source is likely to be small.

*Farm Security Administration*

The general purposes of the F.S.A. involve a number of items including assistance to low income farmers in the purchase of farms by extension of credit and supervision and the rehabilitation of farm families who are unable to secure credit elsewhere. Specifically with respect to farm labor,
grants may be made to move labor from areas of oversupply to places where they are needed. In addition, permanent or mobile camps may be established, if requested by the people of a given community, to provide housing, sanitation, health, education, and recreational facilities for migratory laborers. The F.S.A. may also grant credit to operators to pay their laborers.

**Individual and Community Effort**

*Individual effort*

The first line of action in the wartime farm labor program is the individual farm, where it is essential that labor be economized as much as possible. Individual operators are in the best position to know how this can be done, but the following points are listed as suggestive:

1. adjust farm enterprises so that agricultural workers can be used as nearly as possible 12 months in the year
2. keep all machinery in repair so that fewer parts will be needed and less time required for repair work during the rush seasons
3. foods raised for home use release just that much for use by the armed forces or for shipment to other countries; most of such work can be done at odd times
4. follow closely the most efficient methods of production recommended by the extension service and the experiment station. Approved methods will yield greater returns with less effort.

*Neighborhood and community effort*

But in the face of the present emergency, individual effort is not enough. Cooperation between individuals is necessary. This can best take place on the basis of natural locality groups, that is, neighborhoods and communities, which are already in existence and functioning with respect to numerous services. Consciousness needs to be developed in these local groups that they may also function as agencies for handling labor needs. Possibly a given neighborhood has an oversupply of laborers or an undersupply as the case may be. This information needs to be made known on a neighborhood basis, passed on up to the next larger locality group, the community, and from thence to the parish.

But it should always be kept in mind that the problem should be handled as near as possible to the individual farm. If it cannot be solved on the individual farm, then an attempt should be made to see whether it can be handled in the neighborhood and if not in the neighborhood, then in the community, the parish, or the State. Such an arrangement will greatly facilitate the agencies already in the field which are dealing with labor problems. The United States Employment Service, for example, is anxious to move laborers no farther than is absolutely necessary. If neighborhood and community needs can be reported to them already worked out by the local citizens, the agencies' task in supplying
those needs would be greatly simplified. They would not only know exactly how many laborers were needed or could be spared, but they would also know the exact locality of such need and this on the basis of information from the local citizens who are in the best possible position to know their own needs.

Although neighborhood and community action is basically sound, it does not work automatically. Local leaders are needed to carry on. The Louisiana State Agricultural Extension Service is now getting under way a plan of organization which will provide the facilities for leadership selection and neighborhood and community organization. This in turn is tied in with the United States Department of Agriculture War Boards, the Office of Civilian Defense and the various other organizations working for the war effort.

Existing organizations through which labor problems may be attacked locally

In attacking the labor problem on the neighborhood, community or other locality basis, it may be advisable to function through or in cooperation with one or more of the existing organizations. Although not designed specifically for dealing with labor problems, these groups are more or less incidentally interested in labor and could probably contribute effectively. No specific recommendation can be made for a given community since these organizations are distributed unevenly throughout the State and their effectiveness varies greatly as between different communities. The following groups, however, are among those most commonly found:

(1) Agricultural Planning Committees are set up, or probably will be in the near future, in all parishes except those around New Orleans. These committees are composed of representative farmers and the local employees of the U.S.D.A.

(2) U.S.D.A. War Boards were recently organized by Secretary of Agriculture Wickard in all parishes. The members are the chairman of the parish AAA committee and all of the paid employees of the U.S.D.A.

(3) AAA committees are organized in each parish consisting of representative farmers, the AAA Administrative Assistant and the County Agricultural Agent.

(4) Other farm organizations which usually have a paid U.S.D.A. worker as an adviser or member are as follows:

Farm Women's Clubs
4-H Clubs
Vocational Agricultural and Home Economics Adult Classes
Future Farmers and Future Homemakers of America
FSA Discussion Groups and Cooperative Organizations

17
Farm Bureau
Parent-Teacher Associations
Cow Testing Associations
Soil Conservation District Cooperators
Country Butchery Rings
Farm Credit Cooperatives

In summarizing the function of these organizations in dealing with labor problems it is essential to keep in mind that whatever is done by these organizations is based in the final analysis on the needs of the individual farm family living in the neighborhoods and communities of the state. The function of these organizations is to facilitate the fulfillment of the needs of these families, and thus to give the maximum aid to the war effort. Individual farmers are in a better position than anyone else to know their immediate labor needs and the satisfaction of these needs can be greatly facilitated by local cooperation in neighborhood and community groups.