North Dakota Rural Life Poll
Farm Operators Survey, 1999

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Visiting Professor, NDSU, Fall 1999
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North Dakota Rural Life Poll

• First conducted in 1987 at UND. Also conducted in 1988, 1989, and 1993
• The poll was invited to relocate to NDSU in 1997
• Became a project of the Center for Rural Studies at NDSU in 1999
  – Inter-institutional & inter-disciplinary effort
  – Gown & country collaborative effort
Objectives of the Rural Life Poll

• To monitor the changing conditions in rural North Dakota
• To collect timely & relevant data on the conditions of rural North Dakota
• To disseminate the results to state & national policy makers as well as other interested groups, organizations & individuals
Supporters

• **Benefactors:** Catholic Family Services Rural Support Project

• **Sponsors:** ND Farmers Union Educational Foundation, Farm and Ranch Guide

• **Patron:** ND Department of Agriculture, Eastern ND Synod Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, ND Cooperative Extension Service

• **Contributors:** ND Mental Health Association, ND Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives, Putting the Pieces Together
Methodology

• ND Farm & Ranch Guide subscription list used as sampling frame
• Non-farmers and non-residents excluded
• 680 farmers & ranchers presently operating a farm or ranch interviewed by NDSU Center for Social Research in Sept., Oct.
• With a population of 30504 farms & ranches and a sample of 680, we can be 95% confident that the true values will not vary more than +/-3.7% from survey values
Figure 1: Is there a farm crisis?

- Yes: 98.5%
- No: 1.5%
Figure 1b: Primary cause?

- Weather: 1.2%
- Prices: 31.2%
- Both: 67.6%
Figure 1c: Compared to 80's farm crisis is this one . . ?
Figure 2a: Causes of farm crisis

- Wld. Mkt. Collapse
- Unfair Comp.
- Over-valued $
- Over-prod.

Legend:
- Major
- Minor
- Not a cause
- Don’t know
Figure 2b: Causes of farm crisis

- 96 Farm Bill
- Poor Mngt.
- Vert. Cont.
- Incr. Conc.

Legend:
- Major
- Minor
- Not a cause
- Don’t know
Figure 3a: Concern about farm financial situation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concern Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very concerned</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately concerned</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unconcerned</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly concerned</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not concerned</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 3b: Extent of concern about effects of farm crisis

- Yourself
  - Not: 0%
  - Somewhat: 40%
  - Very: 60%
  - Doesn't apply: 0%

- Spouse
  - Not: 20%
  - Somewhat: 40%
  - Very: 40%
  - Doesn't apply: 0%

- Children
  - Not: 0%
  - Somewhat: 60%
  - Very: 40%
  - Doesn't apply: 0%
Figure 4: Extent of concern about effects of farm stress
Figure 5. Likeliness to seek help?

- Very unlikely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Somewhat likely
- Very likely

Legend:
- Clergy
- Mental Health Prof.
Figure 6a. Effects on family closeness?

- Neither
- Closer together
- Further apart

Percent
Figure 6b. If apart, how much?

- Very much
- Definitely
- Somewhat
- Slightly

Percent
Figure 6c: If closer, how much?

- Very much
- Definitely
- Somewhat
- Slightly

Percent
Figure 7a: Social support

- Relatives
- Children
- Spouse
- Parents

Categories:
- Very unsupportive
- Somewhat unsupportive
- Neither
- Somewhat supportive
- Very supportive
- Doesn’t apply
Figure 7c: Social support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Farm Orgs.</th>
<th>Soc. Serv. Orgs.</th>
<th>Lenders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very unsupportive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat unsupportive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat supportive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very supportive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doesn’t’ apply</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

%
Figure 7d. Involvement

- Very active
- Moderately active
- Somewhat active
- Not at all active

Legend:
- Com. Orgs.
- Church
Figure 8a: Adjustments

- Food Pur.: Increase (0%), Decrease (20%), No Change (80%)
- Mjr. Farm Pur.: Increase (0%), Decrease (60%), No Change (40%)
- Mjr. House. Pur.: Increase (0%), Decrease (60%), No Change (40%)
Figure 8b: Adjustments

- Health Ins.
  - Increase
  - Decrease
  - No change

- Life Ins.
  - Increase
  - Decrease
  - No change

- Credit Pur.
  - Increase
  - Decrease
  - No change
Figure 8c: Adjustments

Enter. Exp.

Med. Care

Church/Charity

Increase  Decrease  No change

0 %  20 %  40 %  60 %  80 %  100 %
Figure 9b. Other adjustments

- Sought Charity: 5.6% Yes, 94.1% No Change, 0.4% Don’t Know
- Sold Mach.: 19.6% Yes, 79.6% No Change
- Sold Live.: 28.5% Yes, 70.4% No Change
Figure 9c. Other adjustments

- Sold Invest.
  - Yes: 13.3%
  - No Change: 85.9%
  - Don't Know: 0.7%

- Cash In Ins.
  - Yes: 10.4%
  - No Change: 88.9%
  - Don't Know: 0.7%

- Deplete Savings
  - Yes: 46.3%
  - No Change: 53.3%
  - Don't Know: 0.4%

Legend:
- **Yes**
- **No Change**
- **Don't Know**
Figure 9d. Other adjustments

Can't Pay Prop. Tax:
- Yes: 27.8%
- No Change: 70.7%
- Don’t Know: 1.5%

Forf. Mort.:
- Yes: 4.1%
- No Change: 95.2%
- Don’t Know: 0.7%
Figure 10a: Future plans

- **Quit**: 21.2% (Yes), 76.6% (No), 2.2% (Don’t know)
- **Retire**: 22.3% (Yes), 74.8% (No), 2.9% (Don’t know)
- **Contract**: 12% (Yes), 85% (No), 2.9% (Don’t know)
- **Expand**: 13.9% (Yes), 85% (No), 1.1% (Don’t know)
Figure 10b. Other adjustments

- Seek Off-farm Job
  - Yes: 52.6%
  - No: 46%
  - Don’t know: 1.5%

- Ch. Crops/Live.
  - Yes: 43.4%
  - No: 54.7%
  - Don’t know: 1.8%

- Ch. Farm Prac.
  - Yes: 32.8%
  - No: 64.6%
  - Don’t know: 2.6%

Legend: 
- Blue: Yes
- Red: No
- Yellow: Don’t know
Figure 11a: Ag. Policy Changes

- Raise Mkt Loan Rt.
- Est. Mkt. Loan
- Est. Safe. Net
- Repeal F2F

Yes % 20 40 60 80 100
No % 20 40 60 80 100
Don’t know % 20 40 60 80 100

Legend:
- Yes
- No
- Don’t know
Figure 11b. Crop Ins. Changes

Rem. Dis. Yr. Yields from APH
Inc. Pre. Plant to 65%
Ext. Crop Ins.

% 0 % 20 % 40 % 60 % 80 % 100 %

- Yes
- No
- Don’t know
Figure 11c. State ag. policy changes

- Rel. Anti-Corp. Farm Law
- Rep. Anti-Corp. Farm Law

- Yes
- No
- Don’t know
Figure 11d. State ag. policy changes

Raise Inc. Tax & Red. Prop. Tax


0 % 20 % 40 % 60 % 80 % 100 %

Yes No Don’t know
Figure 12a. Gross Farm Sales
Figure 12b. Net Farm Income

- $50,000+
- $25,000-$49,999
- $0-$24,999
- Negative
Figure 12c. Acres farmed

- 3841-15000: 7.7
- 2561-3840: 7.4
- 1921-2560: 12.2
- 1281-1920: 16.2
- 642-1280: 25.8
- <=640: 21.5
Figure 12d. Debt to Asset Ratio
Figure 12e. Percent of acres not planted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
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<tr>
<td>1-20%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>21-40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>41-60%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
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<td>61-99%</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
<td>38%</td>
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Figure 12f. Difficulty in securing operating loan?

- Very difficult: 9.8%
- Somewhat difficult: 21.4%
- Not at all difficult: 68.8%
Figure 12h. Marital status

- Married: 87.9%
- Single: 5.1%
- Widowed: 1.5%
- Divorced: 2%

[Pie chart showing marital status distribution]
Table 12i. Education

- 4 year coll degree: 38
- 2 year coll degree: 16.7
- Some voc/coll: 13.3
- High school grad: 19.2
- 8 to 11 years: 34
- Grade school grad: 10.2
- Less than 7 years: 17
Figure 12j. Region

Northwest: 12.7
Northcent.: 15.4
Red River: 27.6
West River: 19
Southcent.: 25.3
Comparison of Data

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<td>36</td>
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<td>9</td>
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