
The page preceding the preface carries this simple dedicatory line: “To my graduate students, 1913 to 1940.” I, like a great many in the agricultural world of today, was one of Professor Hibbard’s graduate students. All of us had and continue to have a deep filial affection for him.

As the years roll by we are able to reflect on the influences in the world of agricultural economics that grew out of Professor Hibbard’s teaching at the University of Wisconsin. He was not the kind of professor who taught a doctrine and expected the students to remember everything that was in his lectures or the textbook. Rather, he was a leader in thought who developed a philosophic understanding of the economic phenomena in agriculture. He was a humanist in the sense that human welfare and human behavior were always of foremost interest to him. His teaching at the University of Wisconsin began in 1913, but Professor Hibbard had been head of the economics department at Iowa State College for 10 years before coming to Wisconsin. Out of his rich teaching experience and work with graduate students at Wisconsin he has produced this book.

All of his graduate students are familiar with Professor Hibbard’s lectures and discussions in his basic course, the “Premises of Agricultural Economics.” The outline of the book follows the type of subjects which made up the topics of that course. One would of necessity pick out the topics of the most important generalizations and associate them with economic principles that are involved in their interpretation and analysis. After discussing what agricultural economics is he moves over to the motivations which cause men to take up farming. He deals with the factors involved in the types and sizes of farms and farm management; the composition of rural populations. He draws on economic theory in the chapters, “Proportioning the Factors of Production,” and “Intensity of Cultivation.” Wages and rent get effective treatment.

Remembering his definitive “History of Public Land Policies in the United States” it seems natural that five chapters should be given to land economics and landlord and tenant relationships. Farm credit and marketing are given meticulous treatment.

Professor Hibbard’s former students will enjoy reading “Ups and Downs of the Tariff.” This reviewer wishes that at least this chapter could have been presented verbatim as it was covered in Benny Hibbard’s lecture days.

Because of Professor Hibbard’s special interest and competence in the subject, he has included chapters that deal with the stories of the six farm organizations—the Grange, the Farmers’ Alliance, the Society of Equity, the Farmers Union, the Non-Partisan League, and the Farm Bureau.

Professor Hibbard has not burdened his book with statistical tables or quantitative analyses that often pass into history by the time the ink is dry. He has kept out quantitative data and discussion that involved theoretical points which would have greatly expanded the scope of the book, thereby limiting the readership and wide use which it deserves and will undoubtedly get by farmers and the general readers. His graduate students know that Professor Hibbard was not only a great and stimulating teacher, but also one who left a deep impression on the student’s mind and in his heart. Many who took his course in the Premises of Agricultural Economics have wished then, and wish now, that they could have complete notes that embody both the outline and philosophies of the lectures. They will find them in this book which is destined to have great value as a general text book in agricultural economics, and as a source and reference book in the library and on the shelves of the individual connected with varied fields of modern agriculture. I recently showed a copy to a man who, as an undergraduate, took Professor Hibbard’s course; upon reading it he remarked that the book was Professor Hibbard’s course through and through and that he would get a copy for his personal reference library.

M. L. Wilson