

MOST ECONOMISTS would probably agree that the essence, or at any rate a primary element, of economic progress is the orderly and continuous adaptation of the use of productive resources to changing conditions of production and demand.

Conceptually, therefore, an economist investigating agricultural progress would have three general objectives: (1) To discern the significant developments, past and prospective, which have altered or may alter the conditions of production and demand; (2) to analyze relationships between these realized and emergent developments, and (3) to portray and evaluate the response of resource utilization to these changed and changing conditions of production and demand.

Although the book under consideration does not explicitly proclaim these objectives, its general tenor suggests that the author would not disagree with this over-all conception of the problems with which he is dealing. In this work the Cotton Belt is considered to be the States of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas.

Dr. Fulmer does discuss the more important developments which have affected and are affecting conditions of agricultural production and demand. The principal ones that he considers are mechanization of production, the extent and rates of urban growth, farm and nonfarm rates of population change, and Government agricultural programs.

A commendable array of data concerning mechanization, urbanization, and population changes is assembled, and the general way in which these developments have affected conditions of production and demand is indicated. It is this reviewer's opinion that the author has somewhat neglected both the delineation, and the nature, of the effects of governmental programs upon the conditions of production and demand.

A thorough analysis of each one of the developments could easily be the subject of a longer work than that now under consideration. There is, then, no occasion for surprise or criticism in the fact that analysis of the relationships between these developments is not very extensive.

In two chapters—*Regional Trends* and *Farm Organizational Changes*—the author marshalls an impressive amount of information concerning the response of agricultural resource utilization to the changed conditions of production and demand. It is regrettable that the nature of the available data, and probably the limitations imposed by restricted time and resources, have resulted in the presentation of these data largely in the form of State and State-group regional averages. Such averages are capable of concealing as much as they reveal. As was the case with analysis of the relationships between developments affecting conditions of production and demand, evaluation of the indicated changes in resource utilization is not extensive. A valuable chapter on income shifts does present income data which are useful in an over-all evaluation of the changes that have been made in resource utilization. This chapter probably could have been made more valuable analytically if the author had taken more explicit recognition of the fact that, in order to effect a gradual transfer of some of its human resources to other segments of the economy, the labor returns from southern agriculture as a whole must be below those prevailing in the economic sectors to which the transfer is expected. Of course, this does not mean that returns in agriculture must be absolutely low.

The evaluation of changes in resource utilization has also suffered, this reviewer believes, from the author's efforts to buttress an apparent predilection to the belief that diminution of cotton production and of numbers of cotton-growing farms is synonymous with agricultural progress in the Cotton Belt.

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