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ABSTRACT

The Northeastern Regional Agricultural Research Planning Committee commissioned a joint U.S. Department of Agriculture-Experiment Station Task Force to provide a framework for Rural Development (RD) research over the next 5 years. Based on criteria of: significance; researchability; relevance to group decisions, actions, and applicability; reference to relevant reports; conference proceedings; and canvassing of relevant individuals and groups; the priority problem areas throughout the Northeast were identified as follows: (1) land use; (2) community services; (3) economic development; (4) local government and finance; (5) housing; (6) processes and strategies. Environmental quality and human resources were identified as lower priority areas. Willingness of researchers and administrators to fit research activities into a total program that best utilizes personnel and facilities was deemed vital. The recommended total research program called for coordination between extension specialists and decision makers, emphasizing regional, rather than local, application and procedure. Suggested vehicles for mobilization of RD research included Northeast Center-14 (a project through which department heads collectively view and coordinate research) and the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development, which, if adequately funded, could serve to unify research efforts. (JC)

RURAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH IN THE NORTHEAST FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS -- A FRAMEWORK

TASK FORCE REPORT

TO

THE NORTHEASTERN REGIONAL

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

PLANNING COMMITTEE

September 1973

PREFACE

This report is submitted to the cochairmen of the Northeast Regional Agricultural Research Committee, Dr. D. W. Barton, Director, Agricultural Experiment Station, Geneva, New York, and Dr. Steven C. King, Deputy Administrator, ARS, USDA Agricultural Research Center, Beltsville, Md. It attempts to focus on priority research problem areas in the general field of rural development and on priority resource requirements, including organization, to facilitate this research. Task Force members are William Crosswhite (ERS, USDA), O. F. Larson (NERCRD), W. L. Park (N. J.), E. E. Seay (R. I.), K. P. Wilkinson (Penn State), and the cochairmen, George E. Brandow (Penn State), and Alan R. Bird (RDS, USDA). Several administrators participated in an initial briefing of the Task Force. They included Drs. D. W. Barton (SAES, Geneva, N. Y.), Steven C. King, (ARS, USDA), W. E. McDaniel (Del.), and William Motes (RDS, USDA). Dr. McDaniel attended two subsequent Task Force meetings.

The Task Force would like to thank the scores of researchers, extension personnel, administrators and other citizen leaders and professionals who helped with information, opinions, reviews and comments. These individuals were from all 12 States in the Northeast and from elsewhere, including Washington, D. C. They included faculty from both 1862 and 1890 universities and colleges. Special thanks go to the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development for developing an inventory of ongoing and completed rural development research in the Northeast and analyzing this activity. This study was essential to the development of the Task Force report and will be available as a supplement to this report.

HIGHLIGHTS

1. This report identifies priority problem areas for research in the Northeast for the next five years and suggests ways of mobilizing the extremely modest research resources to address some of these problem areas.

2. "The purpose of rural development is to create job opportunities, community services, a better quality of living, and an improved social and physical environment in the small cities, towns, villages, and farm communities in rural America."

3. The term "rural" is used in a generalized sense to apply to 3 out of 10 residents in the Northeast.

4. The Northeast comprises Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, West Virginia, Vermont. Related research at 14 land-grant institutions in these 12 states and at the U.S. Department of Agriculture is considered. Emphasis is on work within these states.

5. The unifying element most needed to bring about a rural development research program in the Northeast is a common conception of the subject areas deserving highest priority and of the problems that should be currently attacked. Based on criteria of significance, researchability, relevance to group decisions and actions, and applicability, reference to relevant reports, conference proceedings and canvassing of relevant individuals and groups, the priority problem areas throughout the Northeast were identified as:

   -- Land use
   -- Community services
   -- Economic development

6. Further priority problem areas identified for specialized attention were:

   -- Local government and finance
   -- Housing
   -- Processes and strategies

7. Two areas of lower priority were:

   -- Human resources
   -- Environmental quality

8. To assign a higher priority to areas such as land use and community services than to human resources and environmental quality is not to deny the importance of these latter areas as subjects for concern. The descriptions of the top priority problem areas do, in fact, arise from a primary concern with people and the environment and are phrased in a rural development context that is intended to facilitate productive research.

9. Also needed is a willingness on the part of researchers and administrators to fit the research activities at their stations into a total program that best utilizes personnel and facilities available in the region. This implies concentration on a limited number of topics, specialization at particular stations, emphasis on regional projects at the smaller stations, and team research on a few significant problems at the larger stations.

10. The recommended total research program would put significant effort into an activity now largely neglected by researchers -- working with extension specialists to bring together information already in existence and to focus it upon common types of rural development problems for use by decision makers. USDA would have a role in such work. Most research would have important application in much or all of the region and would be done within the constraints of regional priorities and divisions of work already suggested. Only a small amount of rural development research would be regarded as so specialized to the circumstances within particular states that it would be treated apart from the regional program.

11. Two primary vehicles for further focussing and mobilizing rural development research are recognized. NEC-14, through which department heads collectively view the progress of rural development research and can coordinate work in their departments, has proposed an approach to management of regional research that enables staging of projects. The Task Force endorses this general approach. The other vehicle is the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development (NERCRD) at Cornell, which, if adequately funded, should be able to arrange research seminars, to bring research workers together with extension workers and persons directly engaged in rural development activities, and to give logistical support to a coordinated research program for the region. The recent formation of the Northeastern Agricultural Economics Council and the concern for rural development shown by the Northeast Rural Sociologists can also help to unify research efforts.

12. As a priority activity, the Task Force suggests that NERCRD establish a committee with membership from the region to give continuing attention to problem identification and to arrange an annual conference of research users, extension workers, researchers, and, as needed, planners, political scientists, and other specialists. Sufficient conference time should be available for full and frank exchange of views. The conference should produce recommendations about the next steps needed in rural development research in the region, taking into account the identification of problem areas, types of research, location of research and related matters treated in this report.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH IN THE NORTHEAST FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS -- A FRAMEWORK

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RURAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH IN THE NORTHEAST

FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS -- A FRAMEWORK

INTRODUCTION

The Northeastern Regional Agricultural Research Planning Committee, representing research administrators of the Northeast Experiment Stations and USDA research agencies, commissioned a joint USDA-Experiment Station Task Force of researchers to provide a framework to enable increased effectiveness of research on rural development in the Northeast over the next five years. The charge to the Task Force comprised the following four items:

1. Select, justify, and give priorities for the major researchable problems on rural development in the Northeast.

2. State the resources required for this research over the next five years.

3. Recommend a five-year program to utilize most effectively the existing resources.

4. Based on past performance and present development, recommend the location for the most effective pursuit of the research.

In approaching its assignment, the Task Force recognized that many scholars and other concerned citizens had already developed reports and participated in conferences (1,2,5,6,7)* that addressed similar questions or provided a helpful context. Ideas from such sources influenced this report. Information being assembled by the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development (NERCRD) on the current status of rural development research in the region was timely and useful to the task force. Some states in the region have already made studies of rural development priorities. Proceedings of a conference on rural development regional research (9) provided detailed information on this important part of all rural development research in the Northeast. As described later, the Task Force also surveyed the views of research and extension workers in the region regarding highest priority research problem areas.

The report concentrates upon research in a state experiment station context. However, much of the report's discussion of priority problem areas is also relevant for USDA, and some specific contributions that USDA might make are mentioned.

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*Numbers refer to references cited at the end of the text.

Definitions and Related Comments

Rural development.--In the words of the Presidential task force report A New Life for the Country, "The purpose of rural development is to create job opportunities, community services, a better quality of living, and an improved social and physical environment in the small cities, towns, villages, and farm communities in rural America" (10, p.1). The present Task Force accepted this overall statement of purpose and concentrated on identifying major implied research areas.

Rural development research.--One guide* to identifying rural development research is the recognition that development in this context refers to actions that people might take as groups to improve rural communities. Attracting desirable industries to provide jobs and providing adequate health services are examples. The clientele of rural development research consists of people concerned about such matters, whether the people are officials of local, state, or federal governments, leaders of community orgnaizations, or private citizens wishing to make informed judgments about community affairs. Decision makers need to know the alternatives open to them, the economic and social effects of actions they might take, the consequences of inaction, and the most suitable means of achieving feasible objectives.

Rural development research produces such information. Research results will not be tailor-made for every situation, but research should reveal processes at work, relationships among variables, and effectiveness of enabling instruments so that application can be made to particular situations. As a later section argues, assembling existing information and focussing it upon common types of problem situations to facilitate its application should be considered one type of research. Often it can best be done jointly with extension workers, planners, and others primarily interested in application. Also, the breadth of community problems often calls for a multidisciplinary approach to their solution.

The numerous attempts to define rural development, together with the Task Force's own consideration of priority problem areas, tend to converge on specific topics that help to define rural development more concretely. The topics usually include economic development, community services, certain aspects of "human resources" such as alleviation of poverty, and land use and environmental policies

*Indirectly, of course, a host of innovations springing from research -- a new crop variety, a nonpolluting method of burning coal, a superior insulation for use in building homes -- can contribute to the purpose of rural development, but to define the subject so broadly would make the term meaningless.

to make rural communities better places in which to live and work. Certain topics, such as improvement of the personal distribution of wealth and income -- especially, the elimination of poverty -- and protection of the environment also deserve emphasis in their own right, aside from rural development. To force them wholly into a rural development framework would be to distort research in all the fields involved. Some "people problems" and environmental questions fall within the scope of rural development, but others do not.

The Cooperative State Research Service is developing a definition and classification of rural development research. The definition is consistent with the one used here except that it apparently includes analyses of micro units -- e.g., individual firms or families -- that the Task Force definition excludes.

"Community" in rural development research.--Paralleling the idea that rural development research considers problems that people face as groups is the idea that the primary contextual unit of analysis in such research is the community rather than an individual firm, family, or technical operation. By "community" is meant a local area united by economic, social, or political ties. For some purposes, it may be a village; for others, a multi-county unit.

An analogy between rural development research and farm management research may be useful. In the latter, the farm is the contextual unit of analysis. Questions about individual enterprises -- dairy or apples, for example -- are studied for their effect on the farm as a whole. The farm has limited resources that may be put to different uses. Total receipts must at least equal total expenses. In rural development research, the community, flexibly defined, substitutes for the farm. Particular activities, such as providing sewerage service or attracting new industry, are studied for the costs and benefits the community can expect from them. The community has limited resources and must balance its budget; it cannot do everything it might like. A major difference between the two fields, however, is that the primary objective of the farm is usually taken to be a single one, profit, and is rather easily quantified. Communities consist of individuals not always in agreement; communities have multiple objectives even in the simplest cases; and some likely important objectives are not readily quantified.

Rural development research would be more useful and individual projects would be more additive if the importance of the community as the integrating entity were generally recognized. For example, study of private campgrounds as strictly commercial ventures is at best incomplete rural development research. Their impact on relevant communities in terms of income generation, need for public services, aesthetic quality of the countryside, and so forth should also be included to permit evaluation from the standpoint of a community as a whole.

Rural and nonmetropolitan.--The term "rural" is used in this report in a generalized sense and is broader than either "rural" or "nonmetropolitan" as defined in the 1970 Census of Population. This generalized usage is needed to recognize people and communities with generally similar types of problems and opportunities who are the likely central clientele of mission-oriented research. People in the defined residence categories are eligible for increased forms of assistance, including that provided under the Rural Development Act of 1972.

In the Census, "rural" refers to farms, open countryside and towns of less than 2,500 people; "nonmetropolitan" refers to places outside of counties containing cities of 50,000 or more population. The actual 1970 populations represented by the Census definitions "rural," "urban," "nonmetropolitan" and "metropolitan" are given in table 1 for the Northeast. It can be seen that the term "rural" alone for the Northeast applies to only 12 million people out of a total of 55 million -- or 21.8 percent. If, instead of rural, the term "nonmetropolitan" is used, again only 12 million residents of the Northeast are included, but only 7 million of these are the same residents as were included in the total of 12 million described by the term "rural."

The term "rural" as used in this report encompasses those categories of table 1 other than "urban metropolitan." Use of the expanded definition of "rural" counts a total of 17 million people or 30.9 percent of the total population of the Northeast. Some 3 out of 10 residents in the Northeast are potential clientele for rural development programs and, accordingly, for rural development research.

Table 1--1970 population of Northeast by residence 1/ metro, nonmetro, urban and rural

	Metro (million)	Nonmetro (million)	Total (million)
Urban (million)	38	5	43
Rural (million)	5	7	12
Total (million)	43	12	55

1/ Residence definitions used in the 1970 Census. Metro residents are residents of Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSA's) as of 1970.

Source: 1970 Census of Population and "Farm Population Estimates, 1910-1970", Stat. Bul. 523, USDA, Washington, D.C. 1973.

The Rural Areas of the Northeast

A larger proportion of the population of the Northeast is urban than for the nation as a whole, and the economic, social, and political influence of the urban areas apparently is correspondingly strong. Despite the preponderance of urban population, however, the Northeast contains (by Census definition) the state with the nation's largest rural population, Pennsylvania, and its proportionately most rural state , Vermont. In the nation's most urban state, New Jersey, 70 percent of the land is still used for agriculture forestry.

Even for the United States, the world's largest exporter of farm products, the rural farm population made up only 15.4 percent of the total rural population in 1970. In the Northeast, the percentage was 5.7. Clearly, the welfare of rural people and the satisfying development of their communities involve much more than improvement of the region's agriculture, important as that is.

The Northeast is a distinctive region from the standpoint of rural development. In contrast to trends in the Midwest and the West, its small centers of population have recently grown faster than its larger centers (3). The problem of disappearing small towns, while not unknown in the Northeast, is not a prevalent one as it is, for example, in the Great Plains. The rural population increased 6.7 percent between 1960 and 1970 in the Northeast but declined 2.1 percent in the remainder of the United States in the same period. Such data, together with the fact that the Northeast is older and has been more urbanized than most other areas, suggest that population concentration has peaked in the region.

The rural areas of the Northeast tend to be fragmented. Metropolitan areas break up their continuity. The locations in which farming, mining, and small manufacturing towns thrive are geographically dispersed. This situation is in contrast to that of much of the Midwest and the Great Plains, which still are characterized by large expanses of continuous rurality. The result may be a tendency for community identity in rural areas of the Northeast to be highly localized, with diminished attention to concerns that rural areas have in common.

For such reasons, it is logical to consider rural development research in the Northeast region as distinctive and to recognize ways in which priorities may be different than in other regions. Later statements on problem areas for research further illustrate distinctive features of the Northeast. "Region" in this case has greater significance than it would have only as an administrative subdivision within which research is done. The emphasis on the Northeast in this report, however, should not obscure the fact that rural development research done elsewhere can have highly important implications for the Northeast and that research in the region is only part of a total national program.

THE RESEARCH PROGRAM

Present and Projected Resources

The Task Force did not attempt to give a definitive answer to the question of resources needed to carry out an adequate research program in rural development for the Northeast in the next five years. The charge to the Task Force that posed this question was accompanied by an instruction to take into account projections made by State Agricultural Experiment Stations (SAES) and U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) research administrators regarding scientist man-years (SYM's) expected to be made available for rural development research (more specifically RPG 5.03) over a five-year period under certain assumptions. It was apparent to the Task Force that to answer principal, researchable, rural development problems in the region would require far more resources than would be available. Probably the same could be said about many other areas of research. It seemed more useful, therefore, to comment upon the proportion of resources expected to be devoted to rural development research, to propose the research topics for which they should be used, and to suggest ways of using available resources more effectively.

Projections by SAES and USDA administrators of SMY's to be devoted to rural development research in the five years following 1971 were taken as an indication of the increases expected for that period. The estimates applied to the research classification RPG 5.03, which only roughly corresponds to rural development research as the task force has defined it. The 46.7 SMY's assigned to RPG 5.03 in the SAES's of the region in 1971, however, appeared to be about the same number as would be counted for the task force's definition.

A projection based on the assumption of no change in total SMY's devoted to agricultural research as a whole during the five years showed SMY's for rural development research increasing from 46.7 to 53.9, or from 5.4 percent to 6.2 percent of total SMY's. A second projection based on the assumption that total SMY's would increase by 10 percent showed SMY's for rural development rising from 46.7 to 68.3, or from 5.4 to 7.1 percent of the total. Thus, the Task Force assumed that very modest increase in scientific manpower for the next five years.

To evaluate whether the SMY's expected to be devoted to rural development research are the right number would involve a necessarily subjective study of the productivity of research in all

alternative fields and other considerations. The Task Force did not attempt this evaluation. The Northeast is clearly a region, however, where farmers are a small proportion of the rural population, where at least some agricultural research conducted outside the Northeast is applicable to farms in the regions, and where land use, community services, economic growth, and other aspects of rural development present increasingly pressing problems often with special regional characteristics. Thus, the projected growth in proportion of total SMY's devoted to rural development research appears conservative. Clearly it will be necessary for rural development research to concentrate on a few areas and to coordinate efforts as much as possible.

Data for projects in another research classification, RD-1, suggest that about $48,000 was spent per SMY on rural development research in the Northeast in 1972. If inflation of costs is assumed to be about 6 percent annually, about $68,000 would be required per SMY in 1978 to maintain the same purchasing power. This $68,000 does not provide any expanded support, such as additional travel funds, that may be needed to increase the productivity of researchers.

The Task Force considers these projections to be a realistic guide to the extent to which state experiment stations can be expected to underwrite rural development research through traditional sources of public funds. However, to the extent that research can be adequately organized to produce mission-oriented, practical results of widespread scope and timeliness, it is reasonable to expect that these traditional sources can and should be substantially supplemented. Accordingly, the priority problem areas are listed in this report to help guide the evolution of a more significant research program than that implied by a narrow interpretation of experiment station budget constraints.

The Ongoing Research Program

The inventory of research activity in rural development in the Northeast, given in a supplement to this report prepared by the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development, reveals 133 RD-1 projects active in the period January-June 1973. The count is only approximate because of classification difficulties. Economic Research Service personnel located in Northeast had an additional eight projects.

Each of four substantive areas accounted for more than 10 percent of the state RD-1 projects: economic development (26 projects), land use and land use policy (20 projects), low income families (14 projects), and community services (13 projects). Three categories were intermediate in importance: manpower, social

organization, and education and training. Substantive areas with six percent or fewer of the projects were housing, environmental quality, water, waste materials, and local government.

Four out of 10 state projects were contributing projects to some one of the nine approved regional research projects in rural development in the Northeast. The number of contributing projects at each station ranged from two to nine.

Rural development research in the region may be characterized as individualized, fragmented, small scale, and single discipline, as indexed by the SMY's typically devoted to individual projects. The adverse consequencs of such characteristics, from the standpoint of research which makes an effective contribution to solving significant and complex problems, may be partially offset by the organization of more than 40 percent of the current projects within the framework of regional projects. That current regional projects are not without some shortcomings, however, is indicated by evaluations and recommendations made at the Workshop on Current Development Regional Research in the Northeast (9). Another offsetting factor to the fragmentation characteristics of individual projects is the tendency for some specialization within and among research institutions of the Northeast.

The majority of the SAES's lack breadth or depth on the part of the station staff in the specialized discipline competencies needed for a comprehensive rural development research program. Even in the stations having breadth in staff resources, the evidence of an interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary rural development research project is rare.

One strength is that the projects completed and in progress have accumulated research-based knowledge which can be capitalized on for policy and program purposes, for designing improved research, and for training. What is needed is retrieval and synthesis of the available research and packaging the information in a way which will encourage and facilitate its use.

Another strength is that more than 100 scientists in the research organizations of the region are demonstrating their interest in and commitment to the area through their current participation in rural development research.

Some of the Washington-based nation-wide research conducted by the Economic Research Service (ERS) and by the Research Division, Rural Development Service (formerly EDD, ERS) provides data for units of analysis of vital concern to rural development researchers

within the region. Some investigators in the Northeast are collecting identical or comparable data. There is need to encourage information exchange among land-grant, USDA, and other investigators to reduce duplication of effort.

Development by agencies of common criteria for rural development research would facilitate comparative analysis of research programs.

Criteria for Selection of Research Problem Areas

The Task Force agreed upon these four major criteria for the selection of research problem areas: (1) significance, (2) researchability, (3) relevance to group decisions and actions and (4) applicability.

Significance.--The expected usefulness of research, broadly interpreted, was the basic criteron for selection of problem areas deserving high priority for rural development research. One element of usefulness, of course, is the significance of different problems to society. There are two principal ways to look at this. One is the expressed concerns of people caught up in problem situations and of government officials, extension workers, and other individuals trying to work with people in finding solutions. Such concerns ordinarily are specific and immediate, e.g., the need for better jobs, lack of medical services, or conflicts arising from incompatible uses of land. The second way to identify significant problems for research is to look behind the expressed concerns to detect underlying questions that, if answered, would help to resolve the concerns. For example, the need for jobs in a particular area leads to questions about economic development, which in turn call for knowledge about growth processes at work in the region, community characteristics favorable or unfavorable to growth, and so on. Taking this approach, the researcher may identify a significant research problem that relates to concerns of rural people but is cast in different terms.

Researchability.--If research is to be useful, the problems addressed must be researchable. Expressed concerns in a field like rural development often imply demands for answers that research cannot provide. Many residents of rural communities are unhappy about changes brought on by urban-induced growth and new life styles. Research may be able to show ways of reducing conflicts but it cannot reverse deep-seated trends or resolve differences in value judgments that often underlie conflict. One must therefore ask what the contribution of

research can realistically be expected to be -- significance of an expressed problem does not alone give it high priority for research.

Relevance to group decisions and actions.--The focus of interest, and usually the unit of observation, in rural development, is a local area having common interests because of economic, social, or political ties -- often, all three. The generalized definition of rural is applicable. Rural development has to do with group decisions and activities to produce more satisfying living for the people of the area. Thus research on problems arising directly out of the need for group decisions and activities is rural development research: land use planning, economic development, provision of community services, and methods of developing community consensus are examples. Research on how to operate farms or industrial firms successfully, on how to protect crops from insects, or on techniques of pollution control was not considered rural development research even though such research might be highly useful to a particular community.

Applicability.--Rural development research is applied research and should have obvious relevance. Research on abstract economic or sociological questions was not considered rural development research although it might eventually contribute much to the goals of rural development.

Applying Criteria -- The Process

Members of the Task Force were generally familiar with the numerous reports, conferences, books, and articles dealing with rural development and with the significance of various problems within the field. One member of the Task Force surveyed the opinions of 24 extension workers in rural development in the Northeast concerning needed research. The Task Force also invited research workers in rural development in the region to give their views on problem areas deserving highest priority; 24 replies were received. Informal inquiries by the director of NERCRD since the Center's inception and Task Force members' own perceptions of problems were the other sources of information on this question.

The views of research workers are summarized in the Appendix. Economic development, land use, and community services were most frequently mentioned either in general terms or by naming a specific subarea of the broader category. Other subject matter areas less frequently mentioned included taxation and revenue sharing, local government, manpower, and rural poverty. Environmental quality was mentioned as a general category, and a few respondents discussed water and waste disposal problems both as needs for community services and as environmental questions.

The views of the extension workers were more diverse and harder to classify. Housing was specifically mentioned a few times, and greater concern than among researchers was expressed about local government problems and total community planning. On the whole, the views of extension workers regarding problem areas were consistent with those of researchers, but more dissatisfaction with the current state of knowledge was expressed by extension workers.

Priority Problem Areas Throughout the Northeast

After consideration of all sources of information, the Task Force concluded that three areas within the field of rural development should have high priority for research throughout the Northeast. The areas are land use, community services, and economic development, in that order. Since all rural development subjects are interrelated, the separation used here is somewhat arbitrary. Three other problem areas were also given high priority, but only for work at some stations in each case; they were housing, government and finance, and processes and strategies. Two other areas were given lower priority in part because proposed research in fields given highest priority contributed directly or indirectly to them. These problem areas were human resources and environmental quality.

Effective research in each of the broad areas will require careful selection of projects that address significant problems and that add up to a coherent body of knowledge. Some indications of specific problems are given below. Main reliance needs to be placed, however, on selection of projects by researchers as existing projects are completed and as new ones are developed. Procedures whereby this might be done more effectively are discussed in a later section entitled "Organizing for Research."

Land use.--How land is used is crucial to the kinds of economic activity pursued in a rural area, to the satisfactions derived by residents from their homes and the environment in which they live, to the costs of providing certain community services, and to tax revenues available to local governments. Land is vested with a public interest because consequences about choices made concerning its use extend beyond the landowner to many others in the community. In the Northeast, the growing dispersal of the urban population, improved highways, location of industrial plants in rural areas, rising demand for recreation, the purchase of country homes by urbanites, the preemption of land for public purposes, and the rising sensitivity of the public to aesthetic and environmental qualities have made land use the center of issues of great importance to individuals and to communities.(2)

Objective information is needed to provide local people and officials with knowledge of the economic and social effects -- costs and benefits, and whom they affect -- of different land use patterns. Whether land is used for agriculture or for housing developments, for example, will affect incomes generated in the area, the variety and quantity of community services demanded, and the tax base. And such expected effects, while not the only ones involved, are researchable questions. A similar example is the expected result on the tax base and income generated in a locality when land formerly in private use is taken over for recreational purposes under public auspices.

The instruments of land use control raise related questions. The market is the traditional determinant of land use but does not adequately take into account consequences important to society but not of direct significance to the landowner. The market is imperfect in other respects as well: information about values is uneven, capital is not equally available to all prospective landowners, and possible increases in values due to community growth are often highly speculative. A better understanding of the land market in areas of unstable and changing use would suggest ways in which its operation might be improved and would be especially useful in devising and selecting community controls over the use of land.

Community or public controls of land use include zoning, the use of eminent domain, differential taxation, creation of land use districts, and similar devices that vary widely in the degree to which public regulation and private market forces are combined. The consequences and effectiveness of different forms of control in common rural circumstances need to be much better understood. Also needed are new and innovative ways of exercising land use controls in a setting much different from those in which conventional controls were developed. Methods used in more densely populated areas of the world, such as northwest Europe, deserve attention in this regard.

Especially for the area from Boston to Washington, the pervasiveness of urban settlement greatly influences the nature of its rural development problems. Economic and social linkages to metropolitan centers are particularly strong. The use of rural areas by urban residents for second homes and recreation affect the rural economic base and create special problems of high seasonal variation in economic activity. Seasonal demands for community services vary greatly in some communities. Land values and real estate taxes reflect the urban influence even at long distances. Pollution, the taking of land for highways and airports, and impairment of aesthetic qualities reflect the nearby urban presence. In many rural communities, the question of how to guide and live with growth outweighs concern about a need for growth.

The familiar question of preservation of agricultural land in the urbanizing northeastern United States is only one example of a researchable land use problem. It well illustrates the competition for land, the need for objective information on economic effects on landowners and the community, and the necessity of meeting a new type of problem with innovative ways of achieving community goals.

Community services.--Virtually all communities of the Northeast are faced by rising expectations of their residents as to education, medical facilities, waste disposal, police protection, and other services ordinarily provided through public agencies. The demands are made insistent in many rural communities by population growth, the influx of industry, and rising incomes. In other areas, loss of population, declining economic activity, and erosion of the tax base make necessary services difficult to provide; yet continuation of adverse trends is especially likely if community services are substandard. Reflecting general public opinion, state and federal governments have mandated certain standards to be met, but for some rural communities the requirements are prohibitively expensive, and for others they are in some respects inappropriate. A general problem for rural areas is the tendency for state and federal policies regarding social and environmental services to be dominated by urban considerations and hence sometimes poorly suited to rural conditions.

Since community services are provided by way of public decisions rather than in a market, important questions arise about the desires of different citizens for the services, the influence of different groups on decisions, the means by which a workable consensus can be developed, and the political effectiveness of local governments. Some of these questions are most naturally treated by research on community service problems, while others fall under the category "processes and strategies" described later. Sometimes financing and government organization to provide services are most effectively treated by research on particular services and sometimes as more general questions under the heading "local government and finance." Some of these questions offer a special challenge to researchers of several disciplines -- various economic specialties, sociologists, and political scientists concerned with public choice.

Provision of any community service is an economic activity raising standard questions about the size of operation required for efficiency, facilities and equipment that can be economically justified, planning for future expansion, economies to be achieved by consolidation, and the like. These are eminently researchable, and results can be directly applied.(4) Since the economics of providing public services are greatly affected by density of population, by the geographic scope of the community, and by the

types of economic activity in the community, research applicable to conditions as they exist in the rural Northeast is specifically needed. Related research is needed on the problem of moving from a highly localized delivery system, such as a community hospital, to a more efficient regional system without undermining the sense of mutual identity and community which makes local action possible. In what ways can citizen participation be most productive?

Education is quantitatively and perhaps qualitatively the most important service supplied in the region. For the most part, it is long-established and much studied, however, and devices have been worked out to supply it. Localized problems arise, especially in relatively remote areas. The services on which research is likely to be most useful in the near future include health, solid waste disposal, water supply, and sewerage. The last three directly relate to environmental quality, and all can contribute to economic development.

Welfare services also deserve high priority because of their importance as a public expenditure through direct payments that compete with other community demands and through the need to supply supporting services in low-cost ways. The rural poor experience special circumstances, for example, with respect to housing, access to other public services, and to the sources of what income they have. Transportation is coming to the fore as a need in areas where population density does not induce private supply of the service.

Economic development.--A productive local economy is obviously important to the general level of living of citizens, to the ability of the area to afford community services, to providing jobs for the formerly unemployed, and to giving assistance to families in poverty. People in numerous rural areas are seeking economic development for such reasons. In some communities of the diverse Northeast, however, citizens are not seeking further economic growth and even actively opposing it. Their problem as they see it is to prevent growth or at least to control it so that valued features of nonurban living are preserved. And since economic growth affects different groups in unlike ways and value judgments differ, there is often disagreement within communities on the desirability of growth.

Whether the question is to stimulate economic development or to control it, basic information is needed about how the growth process operates -- the key variables, relationships among them, and control points. Strategies can then be devised to meet communities' objectives. Ascertaining the characteristics of communities that are conducive or unfavorable to growth can aid citizens in particular communities in knowing what they might do

and whether prospective results justify the effort. The impacts of different kinds of growth on communities need to be known if growth is to be controlled to achieve certain results and avoid others.

Priority Problem Areas for Specialized Attention

The Task Force gave high priority to three other areas but judged that work on them should be concentrated in one or two locations rather than undertaken throughout the region. The locations were not specifically identified but would be ones where researchers with appropriate interests or skills are now working or where a suitable team could and would be put together. The areas are local government and finance (considered one area), housing, and processes and strategies (one area).

Local government and finance.--An underlying reason for research in local government and finance is the frequent unsuitability of local governmental units established long ago to the needs of the present day. Some units are too small to render efficiently the services expected of them or are not large enough to encompass all the costs and benefits attached to services they might perform. The district that would make an appropriate area for planning often conforms to no existing political subdivision. State multi-county planning and development districts are an example of new structures coming into being. Research can be useful in showing the size and type of local governmental units needed for particular functions, costs imposed by antiquated units, and means of adapting the old structure for current purposes.

At the same time, both political structure and tradition cause local government in the region to be centered in small units such as villages, townships, and small cities. For much of the Northeast, the county is less important as a functioning unit than in other regions. This situation affects the means by which rural areas make decisions about and carry out rural development activities. For example, multi-county development activities face substantial obstacles in the region. This problem also relates to other problem areas, including land use, community services, and processes and strategies.

Another set of problems relates to management of local governments as functions expand and as methods such as computer accounting come into existence. Capital budgeting should be more widely used. A modest amount of research would be useful to identify the opportunities for improvement of managerial and financial functions as a basis for extension education.

Local taxes are an important part of the total tax structure and a significant limitation on the ability of local governments to provide services expected of them. Research can show the revenue-producing capacity of alternative tax sources, the incidence of taxes, the effects of user fees, impacts of taxes on economic activity, and the relative advantages of financing activities through state and local revenue sources. Revenue sharing currently presents local governments with problems of how best to use a new source of funds.

Housing.--Research in rural housing has not proceeded much beyond analysis of Census data. Better and more detailed data are needed to show the extent and kinds of housing deficiencies, especially in the lower income portion of the rural population. Location is an important aspect of housing; many poor rural families live in places where access to essential services is unsatisfactory. Research to lay the base for improvement of rural housing should obtain information on housing needs; relative costs of improving old dwellings and construction of new ones; location as it affects costs of land, water, sewerage, and related services; advantages and disadvantages of new designs, types (e.g., mobile homes), and construction methods; maintenance costs and debt service; credit availability and subsidies needed for low-income families, with forms they might take. Information on such questions is far less complete for rural housing than for urban housing.

Processes and strategies.--The category processes and strategies deals with the selection of goals, the processes of decision making, the resolution of conflict and development of consensus, the initiation of action to reach goals, the evaluation of means and achievements, and the revision of strategies. The same principles are repeatedly involved as communities deal with specific questions such as solid waste disposal, zoning, or means of attracting new industry. Many unfortunate examples exist of failures, or at least of blemished successes, because known principles were violated in practice. The principles and their application in the setting of the rural Northeast are not completely understood, however, and an important task for rural development research is to extend and refine knowledge of this kind.

Such research draws heavily upon rural sociology and requires researchers both competent in social theory and sensitive to practical problems of rural development. Concentration on this research area at a few locations where the needed personnel are available should be fruitful, but small-scale, ad hoc studies here and there probably would be a waste of resources.

Two Areas of Lower Priority

Two remaining areas warranting allocation of some of the limited resources for rural development research are human resources and environmental quality. Each area is important in its own right and deserving of attention apart from any contribution to rural development. In each case, success in rural development areas given high priority would contribute to solution of problems in the areas given lower priority. For example, economic development to provide jobs and effective health and welfare services would help the rural poor; water systems, solid waste disposal, and sewerage services would improve environmental quality.

Human resources.--Two types of research on human resources are suggested. One involves ascertaining the needs of rural people in poverty, evaluating the effectiveness of welfare measures, and devising improved means of providing assistance to the poor. The work should tie in especially with programs that are or might be administered by local governments, but state and federal programs should also receive attention. The alleviation of poverty is another subject on which state and federal policies tend to be dominated by urban considerations although the needs and effective methods in rural communities may differ substantially from those in cities.

The other type of research deals with manpower problems in rural areas: the capabilities of the labor force, the functioning of the labor market, and training to upgrade skills. The objectives commonly are to stimulate economic development, to raise the general level of income, and to provide good jobs for persons who would otherwise be unemployed or underemployed.

Environmental quality.--Research contributing to environmental quality is feasible in many fields represented in the SAES's and USDA, but the portion that should come under the heading of rural development is much more limited. Protection of an important part of the water supply is included under community services (water systems). Solid waste disposal, sewerage service, and land use controls cover other important environmental matters. There remain, however, several environmental questions that are community concerns and properly considered rural development problems.

Examples of such questions are the control of pollution of streams and lakes having recreational and aesthetic value, control of smoke and dust discharges, licensing of special operators in the use of chemicals, and abatement of erosion on roadsides and housing developments. Methods of assessing damages and effectiveness of control methods, as well as tracing out the impacts of imposed restraints, are potential subjects for research. As in most rural development research, the purpose is to provide individuals and community leaders with an understanding of community alternatives so that they may take effective action in achieving their goals.

Types of Research

The total program (research and extension) in rural development in the Land Grant-USDA system appears to contain an important gap. Decisions are constantly being made at local and state levels about rural development matters on which much useful information exists in diverse and widely scattered sources. It would be very helpful if that information were collected and focussed upon the types of problems frequently encountered in rural development. Such knowledge consists of results of past research, known trends in economic and social data, experiences of other communities in dealing with similar problems, sources of assistance in planning and implementing programs, applicable economic and sociological principles, and still other matters. The knowledge would be particularly valuable because time usually is not available for new research--decisions will be made on information at hand no matter how inadequate.

Extension workers in rural development try to have in their heads information of the kind described and sometimes prepare publications to make it more widely available. But extension workers are often handicapped by lack of time, resources, and access to data. Research workers ordinarily do not regard this type of work as research and frequently neglect to do much of it even in preparation for their own projects. The need is for researchers to join with extension workers in comprehensive searches for information relevant to common rural development problems and to package it so that potential users can understand and apply it.

Work of this type by researchers should be called research and supported by research funds. In order to distinguish it from conventional research, the Task Force calls it type 1 research.

Two types of research as conventionally defined are distinguished to differentiate between research having important implications in most of the region (type 2 research) and research whose application is limited largely to a single state (type 3 research). In the opinion of the Task Force, most research in rural development will have application in other states of the region and even in the nation. Type 2 research, wherever and however done, should fit into a regional research program, and procedures are needed to accomplish this.

Two further, related modifications of "traditional" research deserve consideration by researchers and administrators in the Northeast. They are wider use of experimental design and demonstration projects. Alice Rivlin (11) recently advocated wider use of experimental design in the social sciences, particularly in the evaluation of alternative forms and methods of delivery of community services. She cites, among other things, the New Jersey income maintenance experiment. Both experimentation and demonstration projects are

familiar to experiment station staff and there seems to be considerable potential for them in, for example, designing and improving community services and facilities.

Location of Research

No substantial change in the distribution of research resources among the SAES's and USDA is expected in the near future. The problem, therefore, is to utilize the existing system as efficiently as possible.

Later, we discuss means by which reasonable consensus might be developed within the region as to research that should next be undertaken. Some of this will be type 1 research. Conditions are sufficiently similar in most of the region so that much type 1 research can be done by multi-state committees of research and extension workers. The competency of such working groups should be enlarged by use of political scientists, lawyers, planners, tax experts, etc., as consultants where necessary. Results can be published in regional publications, with supplements prepared for states where local circumstances require special mention.

Since several of the topics that might become the subjects of type 1 research can be approached on a national basis, USDA should sometimes participate in regional projects and should undertake similar work for the nation as a whole. USDA is in an especially good position to be informed about experiences of rural areas the country over and about results of research from all sources.

The bulk of rural development research can be expected to be type 2 research, applicable to more than one state. Two improvements over past practice seem desirable. First, the research should fit more clearly into a coherent program for the region. Second, there should be projects of more scope and depth. Regional projects are an established means of trying to achieve such purposes, and the ones now underway may well turn out to be more successful than regional projects have been in the past. Research done in regional projects has been much criticized, however, for lacking unity of concepts, for poor coordination of data collection and analysis, and for failure to extract as much information from the work as seems potentially available.

Regional projects appear to play a necessary role in research in light of the scattered resources available for the work. They should be especially useful when data are needed from several states or when the participating stations otherwise could not assemble enough resources to attack the problem at hand. Possible means of making regional projects more effective are discussed in the next section.

Much type 2 research can best be done at individual stations if large fractions of research workers' time can be devoted to particular

projects. The case for type 2 research at single stations is strengthened if several researchers there can collaborate on the same project. Then it becomes possible to undertake research of sufficient scope and depth to get at the principal interrelationships involved in complex systems. An important aspect of this is multidisciplinary research. Rural development problems frequently have economic, sociological, legal, political, and other components, including physical, biological and engineering, that cannot be successfully split out and analyzed in isolation from the others. In light of the difficulties often encountered in regional projects involving only one discipline, multidisciplinary research seems most practicable in single-station research.

The opportunity and responsibility to undertake larger-scale projects at single stations clearly is greatest at the stations with most resources, chiefly New York and Pennsylvania. They should expect to do proportionately less of their type 2 research in regional projects than do the smaller stations. The larger stations apparently have done less than they might to do research of the suggested scope. New York had about twice as many SMY's per rural development project as did the small states of the region in 1972, but the New York figure was only about 0.5. The Pennsylvania figure was larger but less than 1.0. The scarcity of multidisciplinary research is particularly noteworthy. Overcoming such difficulties is not impeded by the geographic separation that afflicts regional projects; any improvement depends upon research workers and administrators located at the same station.

Recommended Research Program--A Summary

The unifying element most needed to bring about a rural development research program in the Northeast is a common conception of the subject areas deserving highest priority and of the problems that should be currently attacked. The section entitled "Organizing for Research" discusses possible means of developing such a consensus. Also needed is a willingness on the part of researchers and administrators to fit the research activities at their stations into a total program that best utilizes personnel and facilities available in the region. This implies concentration on a limited number of topics, specialization at particular stations, emphasis on regional projects at the smaller stations, and team research on a few significant problems at the larger stations (in contrast to the current tendency to scatter individual efforts over many fields).

Research in land use, community services, and economic development should be given high priority over most of the region and would be the subject of both regional projects and intensive research at individual stations. Research in housing, in processes and strategies, and in government and finance should also have high priority, but each should be done in only one or two stations having the capability

and desire to undertake the work. Human resources and environmental quality are two other fields in which research might be done. Since each of these fields is broad, further work needs to be done in the process of problem identification and project design before a specific program emerges.

The total research program would put significant effort into an activity now largely neglected by researchers--working with extension specialists to bring together information already in existence and to focus it upon common types of rural development problems for use by decision makers. USDA would have a role in such work. Most research would have important application in much or all of the region and would be done within the constraints of regional priorities and divisions of work already suggested. Only a small amount of rural development research would be regarded as so specialized to the circumstances within particular states that it would be treated apart from the regional program.

ORGANIZING FOR RESEARCH

As already recognized, a productive program of rural development research requires not only adequate resources, but a procedure that (1) identifies current and prospective needs for research, (2) initiates logically related projects to accomplish high priority objectives without duplication, (3) carries out research ably and efficiently, and (4) presents results in ways that maximize their usefulness. Getting the necessary coordination is a familier problem of research in rural development as well as in other fields. This report has especially mentioned the fragmentation problem, the difficulties of regional (multistate) projects, and the frequently limited scope and lack of multidisciplinary research in projects conducted at single stations, including the largest stations.

The following comments and suggestions are pointed toward actions and policies that the Task Force believe would do much toward evolving a productive program of rural development research. They attempt to come to grips with a significant but often neglected dimension of resource needs for productive research -- an adequate, even catalyzing organizational milieu.

Problems of coordination are not new, and two recent responses to them may be instrumental in bringing about substantial improvements in the field of rural development. One is NEC-14, through which department heads collectively view the progress of rural development research and have an opportunity to coordinate work in their departments. The other is the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development (NERCRD) at Cornell, which, if adequately funded, should be able to arrange research seminars, to bring research workers together with extension workers and persons directly engaged in rural development activities, and to give logistical support to a coordinated research program for the region. The recent formation of the Northeastern Agricultural Economics Council and the concern for rural development shown by the Northeast Rural Sociologists can also help to unify research efforts.

NERCRD Committee and Annual Conference on Research Priorities

This report has treated a first necessity of an effective research program -- to identify the researchable problems that at a particular time should receive top priority. This identification evolved from study of deficiencies of information for answering current and prospective questions faced by individuals and groups engaged in rural development and from data on the present state of research and its potential for producing useful knowledge. But problem identification has to dig deeper, consider more specific alternatives, and directly involve those who will do the work. Moreover, problem identification is a continuing process. Priorities change as progress is made and as community and individual circumstances change.

Thus the need arises for some way of continually bringing together the views of both user groups and researchers to identify the problems that research should next address.

The Task Force suggests that NERCRD establish a committee with membership from the region to give continuing attention to problem identification and to arrange an annual conference of research users, extension workers, researchers, and, as needed, planners, political scientists, and other specialists. Sufficient conference time should produce recommendations about the next steps needed in rural development research in the region. The "next steps" should include type 1 and 2 research as defined here, and suggestions should be made as to whether proposed research could best be undertaken on a multistate or single-station basis. They should also include development of interrelated projects, in line with NEC-14 recommendations. This task force report might be the starting point for discussion, particularly in expediting focus on priority problem areas.

Station Policy on New Research

It will then be incumbent upon the individual stations to be guided by the regional recommendations if coordination is to be in fact achieved. Each station should have a firm policy of approving new research only if it conforms with regional recommendations. Project proposals at each station could be sent to other stations for comment. The station directors could utilize NEC-14 as a source of informed judgment when in doubt as to whether a proposal did conform. The one common exception would be research agreed to belong to type 3 -- to apply very largely to an individual state problem.

NEC-14 Proposal on Design and Administration of Regional Projects

Two existing difficulties would next appear: getting effective performance in regional (multistate) projects, and undertaking in-depth and/or multi-disciplinary research at individual stations. NEC-14 has made a proposal calling for more attention to the design of regional projects and for more effective administration of regional projects once initiated. The Task Force endorses the general approach taken in the proposal.

Developing Projects of Substantial Scope

Concerning the other difficulty, the need for broader-gauge projects at individual stations (principally the largest two), the Task Force has a good deal of uncertainty. The problem is a long-standing one, and team research -- especially multidisciplinary research -- ordinarily must be voluntary to be successful. The question requires the serious attention of research administrators.

The Process of Problem Identification

The research process especially needs to be capable of developing good ideas about research to be done and how to do it. Thus, the picture of a conference expected to develop and hand down ideas for others to act upon needs to be modified. Generating ideas should be a continuous process, and NERCRD could play an important role in it. The Center should undertake work of its own to survey needs and to suggest research approaches. Research workers in the region would be expected to submit ideas, especially if they wanted to see the ideas endorsed as an area for future research to be funded through SAES sources. The committee established by the Center would be a collecting point for ideas generated anywhere, and the ideas would be presented to the annual conference described at the outset for its consideration. The conference would then become an annual re-evaluation of the state of research and a decisionmaking point in a continuing process.

Other Considerations

An undesirable feature of organizational means of integrating research in the region into a coherent whole is the substantial bureaucracy they are likely to entail. Committees and conferences can proliferate to the point that they take more time than the research they are supposed to facilitate. This difficulty cannot be entirely avoided in a system with scattered resources and dealing with as heterogeneous a field as rural development. Yet every effort should be made to hold down the bureaucratic overhead. The proposal here is not to introduce another level in the approval of research projects but to develop a regional picture of needed research to guide the decisions of existing approval authorities.

If all research except the small amount that would be classified as type 3 (specialized to particular states) were developed within a framework for the region, as suggested here, the role of regional projects in bringing about coordination of research would be reduced. Regional projects could then be reserved for those undertakings where there was genuine need for interstation cooperation and a real intent at each participating station to make a substantial contribution to the research. Overhead in the form of administrators' and researchers' time going into regional projects could be reduced.

Another help would be fewer and more substantial projects. The need for research of greater scope has already been argued. Research of types 1 and 3 can perhaps be done effectively with small inputs from some subject matter specialists, but most type 2 research cannot. As a general guideline, the Task Force suggests that no station should participate in a regional project on type 2 research unless it can in fact provide at least 0.5 SMY for the work.

A firmer hand by administrators in approving projects is needed to bring about coordination of research in the region. The present proposal is intended to bring about a current evaluation of research priorities in the region and to offer means by which administrators at individual stations can judge whether proposed projects fit into the regional program. Utilization of these sources of information by administrators will be essential to building a truly regional program of research.

There appear to be good opportunities to obtain funds from foundations and government agencies for rural development research if proposals for research of substantial scope or depth are developed and if effective means of doing such research are available. In general, proposals for outside funding might originate either at individual experiment stations or, when regional projects were contemplated, from the Center (NERCRD) acting in behalf of interested stations. When proposals were submitted by individual stations, support by the Center presumably would be helpful. The strengthened procedures for the conduct of regional projects, as suggested by NEC-14, also should be useful in designing attractive projects and in assuring prospective sources of support that the research can be carried to completion.

Some changes in criteria of performance as commonly applied to research workers in universities appear to be desirable. If type 1 research is essential to the knowledge that the public should expect from the Land Grant-USDA system, then good work by a researcher in producing it should be recognized as equivalent to conventional research. Some time spent in working with research users should be acknowledged as contributing to research itself. Rural development is an applied field; presentation of research results through publications other than refereed journals may often be appropriate. Time spent coordinating research on regional projects or across disciplines may cut down on number of publications but be highly useful. Actually getting valid empirical data that decision makers can rely upon or that test important hypotheses usually is more time consuming than constructing abstract models and should be rated at least as high as academic accomplishment. There is no one best pattern of performance in rural development research, but conventional university criteria, which tend to substitute only partially relevant objective tests for good judgment on the part of the university, do not adequately take into account all aspects of performance.

CONCLUDING COMMENT

The Task Force has recommended priorities for broad areas of rural development research in the Northeast but has not attempted to select particular problems for research projects in the next five years or to say specifically how the projects should be undertaken. So high a degree of concreteness seemed infeasible for two general reasons. First, the Task Force did not itself have the requisite knowledge and competencies in all aspects of rural development or the time to do the work through subcommittees or similar devices. Second, research is unlikely to be effectively done unless those who are to do the work participate in selection of problems and in determination of research methods. The Task Force has proposed, therefore, a means by which the more specific work required to bring about a coordinated, operating program might be approached. This is set forth in the section entitled "Organizing for Research."

The Task Force believes that rural development is a field in which new approaches to mobilizing the research resources of the agricultural experiment stations might well be undertaken. Among the reasons for this view are the relative newness and complexity of the field, the establishment of the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development, and the existence of NEC-14. Probably any successful innovations in organizing rural development research would be applicable to at least some other fields.

A good performance in rural development research is important and urgent. The problems rural areas face are large and arise in a dynamic setting that does not permit postponement of decisions until results of slow-paced research are at hand. Much public attention is now focussed on the subject; research establishments that demonstrate capacity to do significant work can hope to have it recognized, but poor performance will be equally recognized. Rural development is not a traditional subject of research for the Land Grant-USDA system, but it is a leading field in which to apply the traditional mission of the system to bring knowledge to bear upon the solution of problems of rural people.

A recent report by the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences provides the following timely commentary:

> "The USDA, through its ties with major universities and its presence in rural America through the Extension Service, could play a major role in research and action programs to make rural America a better place to live. But...hard choices must be made. The task is one that requires full commitment. ... Small, nominal research programs will be unproductive and, if they bring on jurisdictional jealousies, on balance destructive,...If the Department is to become deeply involved in this work, it needs to define

very precisely the problem areas to be assumed and their interrelationships with other problem areas and other governmental bodies." (7, p. 182)

This Task Force report addresses this last need and suggests further steps in the implementation of a research program in rural development for the Northeast.

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APPENDIX

Summary of Research Workers' Opinions Concerning Needed Rural Development Research 1/

Problem area	Number of times mentioned
Economic development, general	7
Recreation	2
Rural-urban conflict	3
Community services, general	3
Health	1
Transportation	3
Education	1
Environmental quality, general	2
Water	1
Waste disposal	3
Community planning and land use, general	7
Use assessment; preserving agricultural land	2
Land market; controls through taxes	2
Zoning	1
Taxation and revenue sharing	3
Organization and management of local government	2
Manpower, youth conservation	2
General quality of living; measurement	2
Rural poverty	2
Methods of and approaches to rural development research	4
Others (one each)	12

1/ Based on 24 responses to an inquiry addressed to research workers in rural development in the Northeast. Most responses named more than one problem area. In making the tabulation, a subitem (e.g., recreation) was not counted if the same respondent listed the general problem area in which the subitem fell (e.g., economic development).