COLORADO AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE
Department of Economics and Sociology
in cooperation with
Colorado Extension Service

Crop and Livestock Farming in Eastern Colorado
Years 1927, 1928 and 1929

A Preliminary Report

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1927 to 1929 inclusive.

In the winter of 1926-27 the county extension agents in Lincoln, Logan, Washington and Weld counties were asked to select farmers who were representative of the different existing types of farming in their counties. In 1929 Sedgwick County was included with the other four.

Representatives of the Department of Economics and Sociology, working with the county extension agents, have visited these farms about three times a year for the years 1927, 1928 and 1929. Yearly inventories have been taken. The farmers kept continuous financial records which were mailed to Fort Collins and tabulated.

Forty farm records were secured for 1927, 23 for 1928 and 29 for 1929. With the exception of three records, all these men owned farms, but about three-fourths of them rented additional land. This would indicate that the size of owned farms has proved too small, and the better farmers are renting additional land to add to their incomes.

In the tables and discussion the farms are grouped as "owner" or "owner-additional" farms. The latter group includes the men who owned some land and rented additional land. The classification of these farms was as follows:

Table 1.- Number of farm records secured.

Year	Owner	Owner-Additional	Tenants
1927	9	29	2
1928	5	18	
1929	5	23	1

The tenant records are not included in the following tables. Wheat, dairying and hogs were the chief sources of income on the three tenant farms. They all made a comfortable living.

There are variations in conditions which affect incomes in the counties studied, but for the purposes of this preliminary report, farms from all counties are shown together.

Studies in other areas of Colorado (see Colo. Sta. Bul. 318) and in other states show that the profits from farming are influenced by such factors as the following:

1. Size of farm.
2. Crop yields and methods of handling crops.
3. Production per animal and feeding practices.
4. Efficiency in using men, horses and machinery.
5. Selection of important farm enterprises.
6. Adjustments in farm plans to meet price changes.
7. Knowledge of values in buying and selling.
8. Managerial ability of the operator.

These farm records have not been presented in this report to emphasize the above factors, but a detailed study of the individual farms shows that they were important causes of variations on these dryland farms.

Table 2.- Average acres per farm each year.

	Owners			Owner-Additional		
	1927	1928	1929	1927	1928	1929
Number farms	9	5	5	29	18	23
Farm area owned	680	496	563	449	428	490
Total area farmed	680	496	563	939	1001	953
Crop area	241	251	271	469	383	456
Wheat	105	142	127	260	164	225
Corn	36	38	53	69	58	54
Barley	30	16	32	56	41	65
Oats	7	8	7	7	10	12
Rye	4			4	5	4
Speltz	3	2	4	2	1	1
Beans	21	12		16	32	14
Alfalfa	3	1	2	8	2	3
Millet	7	6		8	15	11
Cane	12	12	14	21	23	15
Grain hay	2				21	
Other hay	1	10	13	6	4	34
Pasture crops	8	3	16	9	6	17
Miscellaneous	2	1	3	3	1	1

Comparisons of Owner and Owner-Additional Farms

Table 2 shows the average size and the area per farm of the most important crops each year.

Wheat, corn, barley, beans and cane were the important crops.

Table 3 shows the yields per acre reported each year. The wide variations in yield from year to year indicate the results of hail, short rainfall and other factors which affect yield.

Table 3.- Average yields per acre each year.

		Owners			Owner-additional		
		1927	1928	1929	1927	1928	1929
Winter wheat,	bushels	8	14	8	11	13	9
Spring "	"	13	5	24	8	9	12
All "	"	10	12	9	11	12	9
Corn	"	12	13	21	10	8	17
Barley	"	16	24	9	16	18	12
Oats	"	25	19	10	17	13	8
Cane hay	tons	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.4	.7	.7
Alfalfa	"	.9	.4		.9	.8	1.2
Millet, hay	"	1.1	1.0		.6	.6	.3
Millet seed	bushels	9			12	6	8
Speltz	"	7	5	6	14	5	15
Rye	"	3			11	8	4
Beans	"	4	2		4	2	2

Table 4.- Current expenses per farm.

	Owners			Owner-additional		
	1927	1928	1929	1927	1928	1929
Crop area	241	251	271	469	383	456
Current expenses:						
Labor	$152	$322	$263	$451	$217	$292
Repairs	176	206	187	271	217	256
Feed	280	477	306	231	267	274
Pasture				9	6	2
Livestock expense	27	60	41	25	42	54
Seeds	72	49	56	49	50	92
Sack and twine	15	13	12	17	12	11
Threshing	81	85	74	160	88	46
Fuel and oil	95	218	193	249	241	382
Auto	46	18	33	34	39	36
Telephone	8	5	6	5	3	5
Insurance	57		4	38	19	17
Taxes	210	170	227	169	173	215
Cash rent				95	171	75
Miscellaneous	53	42	59	45	31	29
Total cash farm exp.	1272	1665	1461	1848	1576	1786

Table 4 shows the amount paid per year by these farmers for current farm expenses. Labor, repairs, feed, fuel and oil and taxes were the largest items of expense. The total cash expenses per farm were low, amounting to from $4 to $6 per crop acre, indicating the possibility of handling dryland farms for a much lower cost than is possible on irrigated farms.

Under these conditions the farms should pay expenses in poor years and offer the possibility of showing satisfactory returns in years of good crops or fair prices.

Table 5.- Return on operator's investment.

	Owners 1927	Owners 1928	Owners 1929	Owner-additional 1927	Owner-additional 1928	Owner-additional 1929
Farm Receipts:						
Crops	$1644	$1123	$1829	$2751	$1561	$1618
Cattle	514	321	180	573	772	580
Dairy Products	273	486	544	257	342	354
Sheep	7		2	1	3	5
Hogs	202	517	716	415	464	631
Poultry	56	65	129	60	49	69
Eggs	238	381	235	119	231	186
Other receipts	95	143	190	147	136	206
Incr. inven. feed	133	253		157	144	194
Total	3262	3289	3825	4480	3702	3843
Farm Expenses:						
Current	1272	1665	1461	1848	1576	1786
Family labor	41	70	50	122	134	285
Depreciation	429	418	594	486	483	620
Decr. feed			421			
Total	1742	2153	2426	2456	2193	2691
Farm Income	1520	1136	1299	2024	1509	1152
Value operator's labor	680	700	840	712	769	740
Return for investment	840	436	459	1312	740	412
Percent on investment	4.66	3.09	2.14	8.38	5.16	2.31
Farm produce used in home	279	229	241	340	282	269

Table 5 summarizes the receipts and expenses for these farms each year. Nineteen hundred twenty-seven was the best year; 1929 the poorest. During two years the owners made less incomes than the owner-additional farmers. In 1927 owners had $680 for their own labor, $279 worth of farm produce used in the home and made 4.66 percent on their investment. That same year owner-additional farmers had $712 for their labor, $340 produce used in the home and 8.38 percent on their investment.

In 1928 the owner-additional farmers did the best. In 1929 there is little difference, but the total of operators' labor, return for investment and produce used in the home give a slight advantage to the owner farms.

The chief sources of income on these farms were wheat, beans, dairying, beef cattle, hogs and poultry. Corn, barley, cane and other crops were either fed to livestock or else grown in such small areas that the sales did not total very large.

In order to give some idea of the relative profitableness of different types of farming, all farms were grouped according to whether their chief source of income was from crops, livestock, or a combination of both. Owner and owner-additional farms were both combined in one tabulation and returns were measured by the percent that the operator made upon his own investment.

Table 6.- Effect of type of farming upon returns.

	Number records	Average per farm			
		Total area farmed	Value operator's labor	Value produce used in home	Pct. return on operator's investment
Crop farms	23	738	$728	$257	4.5
Livestock farms	30	823	713	245	-.4
Crop & livestock farms	36	997	751	347	7.2

Twenty-three records during 1927-29 were from farmers who relied upon crops as their major source of income. They all sold wheat. Three of them sold beans.

Thirty records were from farmers that depended upon livestock as their chief source of income. They sold either cream, cattle, eggs, hogs or poultry, but seldom more than two of these were important on the same farm.

There were thirty-six records from farmers who had both crops and livestock as important sources of income. The crops and livestock were the same as those sold on the other farms, but there were at least two important sources of income on each farm.

The combination of crops and livestock paid better than either one alone. This is in line with experience in other areas; that a balanced farm business, which spreads the income over the year, reduces the risk of loss and results in average larger returns.