Crisis and Change in U.S. Agriculture: An Overview
by Carol MacLennan and Richard Walker

During the winter of 1978-1979, the nation's capital witnessed one of the largest and most militant demonstrations in recent years. The protest came from an unexpected direction. Family farmers, from the heartland of America, had organized a "tractorcade" to Washington and were blocking traffic in the capital to call attention to the crisis in the U.S. agriculture system which threatened the survival of the family farm. At their bright yellow, green, red, and blue tractors dotted the mall stretching west from Capitol Hill, the farmers lobbied intensely for a "fair price" on farm commodities in hopes of foreseeing their economic future.

The farmers who participated were part of a loose-knit organization, the American Agricultural Movement (AAM), which came together in the fall of 1977 around a call for a nationwide farm strike. Originating in Colorado, the AAM gathered wide support in Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, northern Texas, southern Georgia, Maryland, and Virginia. It caught on largely among grain, cotton, and small livestock farmers. The movement grew rapidly in response to a sequence of lean years in which real farm incomes and profits plummeted. The last season that farmers did well was 1973-1974 and that was primarily due to export failures in foreign countries and large wheat purchases by the Soviet Union which gave farmers new markets. From their peak in 1973, farm prices had fallen roughly 32 percent by 1977.

The farmers' protest reflected a deepening crisis in American agriculture, one of the recurring bouts of "hard times" that periodically strike the farm sector. The farmers of the AAM are suffering from a "cost-price squeeze," caught between declining farm prices and rising high costs. This is not a chance occurrence; economic forces that have been at work in U.S. agriculture for over a century trap farmers in a vicious circle. They constantly try to increase productivity, but in so doing tend to overproduce for the market, driving down prices and incomes. When the
Appliances in the United States

As a result of the decline of the family as a unit of production and the rise of the corporation, the family farm is rapidly becoming obsolete. The family farm is no longer a viable economic unit due to the high cost of modern machinery and the need for large-scale operations. The small family farm is being replaced by larger, more efficient operations that are better suited to the demands of modern agriculture.

The family farm is a unique institution that has been central to American society for centuries. However, the changing economic landscape has made it increasingly difficult for family farmers to compete. The trend towards corporate agriculture has led to a decline in the number of family farms, and many farmers are finding it hard to make a living.

In conclusion, the family farm is a vital part of American culture that has provided for generations of families. However, the changing economic landscape has made it difficult for family farmers to succeed. It is time for the government to recognize this problem and take action to support family farming.

Economic Pressure on the Family Farm

The farmers are facing a difficult situation. They are being squeezed on both sides. The price of farm inputs is rising, while the price of their products is falling. This is making it hard for them to make a living. The government needs to step in and provide some form of support.

The farmers are also facing competition from large corporations that can produce cheaper and more efficient than they can. This is making it hard for them to compete. The government needs to provide some form of support to help them.

The government needs to provide some form of support to the farmers. This could be in the form of subsidies, low-interest loans, or other forms of assistance. The government needs to recognize the importance of the family farm to American society and take steps to support it.

The government needs to work with the farmers to find a solution. The farmers need to be given some form of support to help them survive. The government needs to listen to the farmers and work with them to find a solution.

The government needs to work with the farmers to find a solution. The farmers need to be given some form of support to help them survive. The government needs to listen to the farmers and work with them to find a solution.
goal of raising family income and purchasing power, other pressures work on the family to the same end; the need to pay off past debts, the need for a cushion against calamity, or the need just to maintain income in the face of periods of falling prices.

The most important, and last, is the threat of farm competition: forces all farm households onto a treadmill on which they must each run as fast as the rest in order not to fall behind—and faster than the others to get ahead. For example, if demand for farm commodities is constant and output rises, the sale of new farm products into production or old farmers producing more than before, prices will fall, reducing the income of any farm that does not increase its output proportionately. Even if demand is rising, the same dilemma occurs as long as production expands faster than demand. Paradoxically, fear of failing behind in the production race becomes an additional reason for every farmer to run a little faster.

Family farmers have two ways of increasing production: tilling more land (along the common method) and improving yields per acre (see Table 1). Both require mechanization, given that continuation of the family farm means, by definition, that one must get the most out of the labor of the household. Higher yields per acre also depend on irrigation, fertilization, and improved varieties of seed. In other words, the production treadmill becomes a productivity treadmill, in which the way to prosperity and survival is to increase labor productivity and the size of landholdings (see Table 1).

As a consequence of the productivity race, the family farm system can, under the right conditions, be a dynamo one in terms of agricultural development. But this drive to increase productivity also contributes to the financial undoing and gradual elimination of large numbers of family farms. The unexplained nature of the market, coupled with the desire of families to raise their income, ensures that there will be a tendency to overproduction relative to demand. Overproduction in turn leads to falling prices and hence declining incomes. When income drops, many family farmers are unable to meet the costs they incurred in trying to compete. This is the essence of the cost-price squeeze that periodically plagues the small family farmer.

When prices are strong, each individual farmer hopes to take

### Table 1: Basic Trends in U.S. Agriculture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A) Non-Urban Population (persons)</th>
<th>B) Farm Population (persons)</th>
<th>C) Total Farm Acreage (million)</th>
<th>D) Numbers of Farmland (thousands)</th>
<th>E) Average Size of Farm (acres)</th>
<th>F) Size Distribution of Farms Over 1,000 Acres (thousands)</th>
<th>G) Total Farm Output Index, 1947-49</th>
<th>L) Average Value Per Farm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1870</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>1890</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>1890</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>1910</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>1910</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

advantage of the situation by planting more, acquiring new lands, and so forth. The net effect is likely to be general overproduction, with the market unable to absorb expanded output without lowering the price. Even though farmers try to take their competitors and future conditions into account, their ability to plan is undercut by factors beyond their control, such as the weather. The likelihood of guessing wrong is increased by the time lag between planting and harvesting, or between calving and slaughtering. Wars, business cycles, or grain shipments in the Soviet Union may generate wrong market conditions at the beginning of the production cycle which spur farmers to increase production in the expectation of higher prices. When it comes time to sell, however, market conditions may have changed, leaving farmers overcommitted.

On the other side of the ledger, farmers are bound by fixed costs. Commercial agriculture means that they must buy certain necessary inputs, such as seed, equipment, fuel, or land. It is the exceptional family farmer who is not burdened with debt. Farmers go into debt to buy their farms, to buy the current season’s seeds and fertilizer, to buy equipment to last for years. Credit is basic to farming as are seeds and sunshine. Moreover, credit is the lever which allows farmers to purchase the land and capital equipment to improve their productivity. But debts bring payments that must be met, regardless of the features of the harvest and the market. As a result, they also become the principal cause of financial insecurity when crops fail or prices fall.

Because the tendency of overproduction occurs in a cyclical fashion, severe cost-price crunches do also. Periods of high prices trigger new investments and new debts which cannot be met by many farmers when prices fall again. This sequence has been repeated many times. For example, the boom of World War I was followed by worsening prices in the 1920s and finally a disastrous drop in the markets in the 1930s. Recently, the export boom of the early 1970s precipitated the overcommitments by farmers now joining the A&M. Each time the crunch comes, many farmers go bankrupt or are forced to sell out. Their land and equipment is bought by competitors, who consolidate their gains, waiting for demand to pick up again. Then the cycle begins anew, with fewer farmers than the last time, more equipment per farm, and higher levels of productivity. The treadmill rolls on.

The "productivity treadmill" helps explain such long-run trends in the United States as the declining number of farmers and increasing size of farms. But this dynamic has additional consequences for the nature of agricultural production and the class structure of the farm sector in the United States. To begin with, it has meant the increasing industrialization of American agriculture. With every cycle of expansion and contraction, farmers buy more machinery, apply more fertilizers, and increase the size of their operations. As they do so, the nature of farming itself undergoes fundamental changes which make it resemble in some ways industrial factory production.

The Industrialization of Farming

In areas where industrialization is most advanced, such as California, farming can be described more as a system of "factories in the field" than as one of family farms, owing to the degree of mechanization and use of hired labor. Highly industrialized tomato production in California, where specialty bred varieties of prune resistant tomatoes are harvested entirely by machine, is an example of how mechanical and genetic engineering has transformed production. This process of industrialization in U.S. agriculture has been underway for about 150 years.

Industrialization begins with the introduction of machines into the production process, where they perform the same functions previously carried out by workers. Classic examples of such machines in farming are the mechanical reapers, threshers, and cultivators introduced in the mid-nineteenth century by McCormick, John Deere, and others. These machines began as imitations of the simple tools used by farmers. By increasing the number of tools in each machine, perfecting their performance, and increasing their speed (with the aid of mechanical power), the productivity of the farmer rapidly multiplied. Mechanization enormously increased the acreage that one person could plant, till, hoe, harrow, or reap. Adding tractors as the motive force for such machines raised their capabilities still more. Not surprisingly, today’s 2.7 million farms own 4.4 million tractors. Yet the
Agrochemicals in the United States

28

Agriculture and forestry industries have been traditionally associated with the use of agrochemicals, which include fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides. These products are essential for increasing crop yields and protecting plants from various threats. In recent years, there has been increased emphasis on sustainable practices and reducing the environmental impact of agrochemical use. This has led to the development of new technologies and approaches to minimize the reliance on traditional chemical inputs.

In the United States, the production and consumption of agrochemicals have been influenced by factors such as agricultural practices, crop yields, and governmental regulations. The use of agrochemicals has been shown to be effective in enhancing crop productivity, but concerns have been raised regarding their potential negative impacts on human health and the environment.

The production and application of agrochemicals are subject to strict regulations in the United States, with agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) overseeing the registration, labeling, and use of these products.

The impact of agrochemicals on soil health and biodiversity is an area of ongoing research, with efforts to develop more sustainable practices gaining momentum. The development of new technologies and the use of integrated pest management strategies are among the approaches being explored to reduce the reliance on traditional chemical inputs and promote more environmentally friendly agriculture.
One of the burning questions in agriculture over the last decade has been whether large corporations were invading the land. The answer has not been a clear-cut one. The concept of the "family farm" has been a cornerstone of American agriculture, and corporate involvement in agriculture has been viewed with suspicion by many farmers. However, the corporate presence in agriculture has grown significantly in recent years, with large corporations acquiring smaller family farms and establishing their own operations. This has led to concerns about the consolidation of power and the potential for corporate control over the food system.

In the 1970s, a report by Senator George McGovern highlighted the issue of corporate control in agriculture. The report, known as the McGovern Committee, called attention to the growing concentration of corporate power in the agricultural sector. The report recommended reforms to ensure that the food system remained in the hands of small farmers and that corporate interests did not dominate.

However, the report's recommendations were largely ignored, and the trend toward corporate consolidation continued. Today, large corporations such as ConAgra, Archer-Daniels-Midland (ADM), and Cargill dominate the agricultural sector, controlling everything from crop production to food processing.

This corporate consolidation has had significant implications for farmers and consumers alike. For farmers, it has meant increased pressure to conform to corporate standards and practices, often at the expense of traditional methods and values. For consumers, it has meant a limited variety of products and a lack of transparency in the food system.

Despite these concerns, the corporate presence in agriculture is likely to continue to grow in the coming years. As the global population continues to increase, so will the demand for food. To meet this demand, large corporations will need to expand their operations and reach into new markets. This will likely mean further consolidation and increased control over the food system.
As industrialization has made inroads into the agricultural sector, the number of small farmers has declined. However, the very small farmers, who are often just subsistence farmers, continue to exist. In the U.S., for example, there are over 2 million small farmers, each with less than $10,000 in annual sales.

In the past, small farmers have often been viewed as an obstacle to larger, more efficient farms. However, the small farms have managed to remain competitive by focusing on high-quality, specialty crops. This has allowed them to command premium prices, even in a highly competitive market.

One example of a successful small farmer is Pat Benedict, who operates a 2,000-acre farm in California. He grows organic broccoli, which he sells to a variety of specialty markets. Pat has been able to stay competitive by investing in the latest farming technologies, such as drip irrigation and precision agriculture.

Small farmers like Pat are an important part of our food system. They provide fresh, healthy local produce, support the economic well-being of rural communities, and help preserve the environment. As we move forward, it's important to support and protect these small farms, so that they can continue to thrive and meet the food needs of our communities.
small family farms: that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that the small family farms which supports the diversified economy must be recognized that
36

Agriculture in the United States

...is committed to the idea that the family farm is a viable unit of agricultural production. However, to maintain its viability, the family farm must diversify its production to include non-farm activities, such as tourism or small businesses. This approach is known as diversified farming. Diversification can help farmers adapt to changing market conditions and reduce their reliance on traditional crops. In this way, the family farm can remain economically viable in the long term.

Large farms, on the other hand, are more likely to specialize in the production of a single crop or commodity. This specialization allows them to achieve economies of scale, reducing their production costs and increasing their competitiveness in the market. However, this specialization also makes them more vulnerable to market fluctuations and can lead to a lack of economic diversification.

The agricultural sector in the United States is diverse, with a wide range of crops and livestock. This diversity is crucial for ensuring food security and maintaining biodiversity. However, the industry faces challenges such as climate change, which can affect crop yields and the availability of resources. Therefore, it is important to continue supporting agriculture and investing in research to address these challenges.
Appalachia in the United States

30 Applications to the U.S. Agriculture

3. A family farm is growing between 1955 and 1974. The Lake Shore reported a 30 percent increase in the use of hired labor by the Lake Shore, while the annual increase in the use of hired labor by the Lake Shore was 2.5 percent. This increase is due to the following factors:

1. The increase in the use of hired labor by the family farm is a result of the increased use of hired labor by the Lake Shore, while the annual increase in the use of hired labor by the Lake Shore was 2.5 percent. This increase is due to the following factors:

2. The increase in the use of hired labor by the family farm is a result of the increased use of hired labor by the Lake Shore, while the annual increase in the use of hired labor by the Lake Shore was 2.5 percent. This increase is due to the following factors:

3. The increase in the use of hired labor by the family farm is a result of the increased use of hired labor by the Lake Shore, while the annual increase in the use of hired labor by the Lake Shore was 2.5 percent. This increase is due to the following factors:

4. The increase in the use of hired labor by the family farm is a result of the increased use of hired labor by the Lake Shore, while the annual increase in the use of hired labor by the Lake Shore was 2.5 percent. This increase is due to the following factors:

5. The increase in the use of hired labor by the family farm is a result of the increased use of hired labor by the Lake Shore, while the annual increase in the use of hired labor by the Lake Shore was 2.5 percent. This increase is due to the following factors:

6. The increase in the use of hired labor by the family farm is a result of the increased use of hired labor by the Lake Shore, while the annual increase in the use of hired labor by the Lake Shore was 2.5 percent. This increase is due to the following factors:

7. The increase in the use of hired labor by the family farm is a result of the increased use of hired labor by the Lake Shore, while the annual increase in the use of hired labor by the Lake Shore was 2.5 percent. This increase is due to the following factors:

8. The increase in the use of hired labor by the family farm is a result of the increased use of hired labor by the Lake Shore, while the annual increase in the use of hired labor by the Lake Shore was 2.5 percent. This increase is due to the following factors:

9. The increase in the use of hired labor by the family farm is a result of the increased use of hired labor by the Lake Shore, while the annual increase in the use of hired labor by the Lake Shore was 2.5 percent. This increase is due to the following factors:

10. The increase in the use of hired labor by the family farm is a result of the increased use of hired labor by the Lake Shore, while the annual increase in the use of hired labor by the Lake Shore was 2.5 percent. This increase is due to the following factors:

11. The increase in the use of hired labor by the family farm is a result of the increased use of hired labor by the Lake Shore, while the annual increase in the use of hired labor by the Lake Shore was 2.5 percent. This increase is due to the following factors:

12. The increase in the use of hired labor by the family farm is a result of the increased use of hired labor by the Lake Shore, while the annual increase in the use of hired labor by the Lake Shore was 2.5 percent. This increase is due to the following factors:

13. The increase in the use of hired labor by the family farm is a result of the increased use of hired labor by the Lake Shore, while the annual increase in the use of hired labor by the Lake Shore was 2.5 percent. This increase is due to the following factors:

14. The increase in the use of hired labor by the family farm is a result of the increased use of hired labor by the Lake Shore, while the annual increase in the use of hired labor by the Lake Shore was 2.5 percent. This increase is due to the following factors:

15. The increase in the use of hired labor by the family farm is a result of the increased use of hired labor by the Lake Shore, while the annual increase in the use of hired labor by the Lake Shore was 2.5 percent. This increase is due to the following factors:

16. The increase in the use of hired labor by the family farm is a result of the increased use of hired labor by the Lake Shore, while the annual increase in the use of hired labor by the Lake Shore was 2.5 percent. This increase is due to the following factors:

17. The increase in the use of hired labor by the family farm is a result of the increased use of hired labor by the Lake Shore, while the annual increase in the use of hired labor by the Lake Shore was 2.5 percent. This increase is due to the following factors:

18. The increase in the use of hired labor by the family farm is a result of the increased use of hired labor by the Lake Shore, while the annual increase in the use of hired labor by the Lake Shore was 2.5 percent. This increase is due to the following factors:

19. The increase in the use of hired labor by the family farm is a result of the increased use of hired labor by the Lake Shore, while the annual increase in the use of hired labor by the Lake Shore was 2.5 percent. This increase is due to the following factors:

20. The increase in the use of hired labor by the family farm is a result of the increased use of hired labor by the Lake Shore, while the annual increase in the use of hired labor by the Lake Shore was 2.5 percent. This increase is due to the following factors:

21. The increase in the use of hired labor by the family farm is a result of the increased use of hired labor by the Lake Shore, while the annual increase in the use of hired labor by the Lake Shore was 2.5 percent. This increase is due to the following factors:

22. The increase in the use of hired labor by the family farm is a result of the increased use of hired labor by the Lake Shore, while the annual increase in the use of hired labor by the Lake Shore was 2.5 percent. This increase is due to the following factors:

23. The increase in the use of hired labor by the family farm is a result of the increased use of hired labor by the Lake Shore, while the annual increase in the use of hired labor by the Lake Shore was 2.5 percent. This increase is due to the following factors:

24. The increase in the use of hired labor by the family farm is a result of the increased use of hired labor by the Lake Shore, while the annual increase in the use of hired labor by the Lake Shore was 2.5 percent. This increase is due to the following factors:

25. The increase in the use of hired labor by the family farm is a result of the increased use of hired labor by the Lake Shore, while the annual increase in the use of hired labor by the Lake Shore was 2.5 percent. This increase is due to the following factors:

26. The increase in the use of hired labor by the family farm is a result of the increased use of hired labor by the Lake Shore, while the annual increase in the use of hired labor by the Lake Shore was 2.5 percent. This increase is due to the following factors:

27. The increase in the use of hired labor by the family farm is a result of the increased use of hired labor by the Lake Shore, while the annual increase in the use of hired labor by the Lake Shore was 2.5 percent. This increase is due to the following factors:

28. The increase in the use of hired labor by the family farm is a result of the increased use of hired labor by the Lake Shore, while the annual increase in the use of hired labor by the Lake Shore was 2.5 percent. This increase is due to the following factors:

29. The increase in the use of hired labor by the family farm is a result of the increased use of hired labor by the Lake Shore, while the annual increase in the use of hired labor by the Lake Shore was 2.5 percent. This increase is due to the following factors:

30. The increase in the use of hired labor by the family farm is a result of the increased use of hired labor by the Lake Shore, while the annual increase in the use of hired labor by the Lake Shore was 2.5 percent. This increase is due to the following factors:
farmers, farm interests support the parity demands of the AAM (except the large livestock farmers who depend on cheap grain prices). But it is primarily the demand of the medium-sized family farmers who are representing their class interest as the interest of all classes in agriculture. As such, parity politics diverts attention from the growing division among farming classes. The agrarian bourgeoisie, with a more permanent workforce, greater access to credit and markets, and an increased ability to raise productivity levels, is in a radically different economic position from smaller farmers who exploit their family's own labor. Parity is also not a life-and-death matter for semiproletarian farmers whose debts are less and who can seek off-farm employment.

Moreover, in the long run, government-supported high prices do little to solve the structural problems of the family farmers. They simply encourage further efforts to expand output and recreate the dilemma of overproduction and overinvestment on a larger scale. Meanwhile, the initiative continues to pass to the capitalist farm operators, who stand to benefit as much or more than their smaller competitors from high prices and government payments.

Neither the AAM nor the plight of hardpressed family farmers from which it grows are unique in American history. Like previous farm movements, the AAM is rooted in the wider economic forces that shape U.S. agriculture. Many farmers have only a limited perception of those forces and the way in which they participate in their own undoing. As a result, the parity focus of the AAM touches only on the surface manifestations rather than the systemic roots of the economic woes of U.S. farmers.

While their cause is to one sense a progressive one—so far as many farmers are struggling against the encroaching power of the banks, the corporations, and the large-scale agribusiness firms, we should be under no illusions that this populist struggle can turn back the clock. The U.S. family farm cannot survive as the dominant form of agricultural production. Ultimately, the remaining family farmers, the farmworkers, and the other sectors of the U.S. working class will have to assume control of both agriculture and industry and forge a new agricultural system that takes into consideration the needs of the vast majority of the American people.
Notes

4. Kevin Kelly, "The Independent Mode of Production," Review of Radical Political Economy 11, no. 1 (1979): 38-46. Kelly has introduced the concept of the "independent mode of production" as a more general term for 450,000 independent household producers that Marx's "simple commodity production." In a thoroughly commercialized economy such as the U.S. has been since colonial times, the two terms can be used interchangeably. Also see Karl Marx, Capital (New York: International Publishers, 1967), Vol. 1, Chap. 32, and Friedman, "Simple Commodities Production," p. 71.
5. From early in U.S. agriculture this has been the case. Contrary to popular myth, few homeowners were able to start out "from scratch." Land almost always had to be purchased, whether from the federal government, local grantees, or more important land speculators with farms in the East or in Europe. See Ray Rethem, Our Farmed Heritage: The Public Domain, 1776-1979 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1976), and A. M. Sakolski, The Great American Land Rush (New York: Harper & Bros., 1925).
11. Ibid., p. 75.
12. Ibid., p. 75. While Perelman is aware of the importance of the social division of labor for U.S. agriculture, he fails to totally the family farm system as a mode of production embedded in a capitalist system rather than as a branch of capitalist production. He uses terms such as "new feudalism" to describe the relations between capital and farmers which are quite misleading.
and the Beginnings of Suburbanization,” in Kevin Cox, ed., Urbanization and Conflict in Market Society (Chicago: Mauronda Press, 1978), pp. 165-212. This development has contributed to the conclusion about the nature of the U.S. agricultural system and the factors to realize that the farm family system cannot be understood simply as a branch of capitalist production.

15. Roy Barber, “Science and Technology in Western Agriculture,” Agricultural History 50, no. 1 (January 1976): 56-72. Barber also tries to use climate as an explanation for the advanced state of California’s mechanization. The question is why large holdings have prevailed in California more than elsewhere is one that has never been satisfactorily answered. The usual explanations—cheap labor and reliance on specialty crops in a mild climate—do not work, since big growers never relied extensively on either. This has been pointed out to us by Ellen Lehman, Department of Geography, University of California, Berkeley, and is based on her doctoral research.
16. Tensions Corporation, Agricultural Report (Houston), November 1978. The growth of contract farming in recent years has been substantial and has fueled critics of monopoly power who hold that the plight of small farmers can be traced to this source alone.
21. Trenberth and Huffman, “Structural Change,” p. 5. This level of concentration still permits agriculture well below any other industry in degree of concentration—which serves as another reminder of the lack of transformation of family capitalism and corporate production relations.
23. As a result, the smallest farms have less debt and fewer banknotes than their larger brethren. Frequently, Farming for Profit, pp. 85, 94.
27. Forbes, March 5, 1979.
AGRIBUSINESS
IN THE
AMERICAS
BY ROGER BURBACH AND
PATRICIA FLYNN

MONTHLY REVIEW PRESS
NORTH AMERICAN CONGRESS ON LATIN AMERICA 1960