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United States Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service
Division of Economic Research and the Wisconsin Agricultural
Experiment Station

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TENTH ANNUAL REPORT
COON CREEK FARM ACCOUNT WORK

La Crosse, Monroe, and Vernon Counties
1943

La Crosse, Wisconsin
May 1944

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TENTH ANNUAL REPORT OF
THE COON CREEK FARM ACCOUNT WORK

1943

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This report is based on farm records for 26 farms in the Coon Creek Area for 1943. Comparisons of some of the more important factors affecting the net income of these farmers are included in this report, as is also a discussion of the food production of 1943 and the food production probabilities for 1944.

Food production increased in 1943

The production of all the more important farm products was larger in 1943 than in 1942. Production of both butterfat and hogs was 7 per cent higher, while the production of eggs was 10 per cent larger than for the year previous. These increases were due primarily to the larger numbers of livestock kept rather than to increases in productions per unit.

The unusually large quantities of feed necessary for this production of food were due primarily to an unusually favorable growing season, although increased feed purchases, longer crop rotations, the increased use of lime, commercial fertilizers, hybrid corn and Vicland oats were also important contributing factors.

Crop land was farmed more intensively in 1943

In the attempt to meet wartime needs for food, these Coon Creek operators farmed more intensively in 1943 than in 1942. The proportion of crop land in hay decreased from 46 to 43 per cent, and the amount in corn increased from 25 to 27 per cent. This tendency to decrease the hay acreage and increase the corn acreage, although not in line with soil conservation recommendations, may be justified on the grounds of the nations wartime need for increased food production. Over a short period a shift in crops of this nature may be effective in increasing food supplies, although it is very probable that over a longer period the reverse would be true because a reduction in hay acreage might have a very adverse effect on the per acre yields of both corn and small grains. After the war, these farmers will probably follow more closely those crop rotations based on their land use capability.

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Table 1.--Crop acreages, 26 farms, Coon Creek, 1942

	Your Farm	Average 26 farms	5 highest profit farms	5 lowest profit farms
	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres
Alfalfa hay.....	5.9	5.9	6.8	2.2
Mixed legume hay.....	21.9	21.9	27.2	19.0
Soybean hay.....	.4	.4	--	.4
Grass hay.....	.4	.4	--	2.0
Total hay.....	28.6	28.6	34.0	23.6
Corn silage.....	6.3	6.3	7.0	3.8
Corn grain.....	11.3	11.3	13.8	8.6
Total corn.....	17.6	17.6	25.8	12.4
Oats.....	13.4	13.4	18.2	11.5
Barley.....	1.2	1.2	4.0	1.4
Mixed grain.....	2.3	2.3	2.8	--
Other grain.....	.4	.4	--	--
Total grain.....	17.3	17.3	25.0	12.9
Tobacco.....	1.2	1.2	1.7	.6
Other.....	1.4	1.4	--	1.4
Total acres in crops.....	66.1	66.1	86.5	50.9
Rotation pasture.....	9.5	9.5	11.5	8.9
Open perm. pasture.....	33.3	33.3	35.6	27.9
Wooded pasture.....	18.2	18.2	30.6	18.6
Woods not pastured.....	24.1	24.1	26.0	22.7
Other land in farm.....	5.8	5.8	6.4	4.4
Total acres in farm.....	157.0	157.0	196.6	133.4
% of farm in crops.....	42	42	44	38
% of cropland in hay.....	43	43	39	46
% of cropland in corn.....	27	27	30	24
% of cropland in grain.....	26	26	29	25

Table 2.--Crop yields per acre, 26 farms, Coon Creek, 1943

	Your Farm	Average 26 farms	5 highest profit farms	5 lowest profit farms
Alfalfa hay, tons.....	2.9	2.9	3.4	2.4
Mixed legume hay, tons.....	2.6	2.6	2.4	2.9
Soybean hay, tons.....	3.3	3.3	--	2.5
All hay, tons.....	2.7	2.7	2.4	2.9
Corn silage, tons.....	11.7	11.7	13.3	11.1
Corn grain, bushels.....	66	66	66	70
Oats, bushels.....	48	48	45	50
Barley, bushels.....	30	30	27	20
Mixed grain, bushels.....	40	40	43	---
Other grain, bushels.....	26	26	---	---
Tobacco, pounds.....	1510	1510	1700	1117
Fertilizers purchased, lbs..	3373	3373	5480	720
Fertilizers purchased per acre of crops.....	51	51	63	14

Crop yields were higher in 1943

The growing season was favorable in 1943 with the result that the yields for most crops were higher than for 1942. Yields were lower for only two crops, barley and tobacco. Increased yields, although due primarily to a more favorable growing season, were also influenced by the use of more hybrid corn, Vicland oats, lime, commercial fertilizers strip cropping and other soil conserving practices.

The farm family furnished most of the labor

These 26 farms were operated with the equivalent of two full time workers. Eighty per cent of the work was done by the farmer and his family and only 20 per cent by hired workers. The number of workers on these farms was about the same as in 1942, and in general was adequate. A few of the larger farms, however, were definitely short of labor, and will continue to experience some difficulty in maintaining production at the high level of 1943 unless some adjustments can be made to meet this labor shortage.

Labor worked harder and produced more in 1943

The increased productions in 1943 were obtained with a labor force about the same as that of 1942. This indicates an increased productivity for labor. Each worker in 1943 took care of 2.5 acres more of crop land and one unit more of productive livestock than was the case the year previous. The effectiveness of his labor was increased further by greater productivities per acre of land and per unit of livestock. In terms of physical commodities, he produced more than the worker in 1942 by 6 tons of hay, $4\frac{1}{2}$ tons of corn silage, 82 bushels of corn grain, 139 bushels of oats, 3 bushels of other grain, 155 pounds of butterfat, 175 pounds of pork, and 147 dozens of eggs. Decreased productions per worker were obtained for only three commodities, these being 4.7 bushels of barley, 48 bushels of mixed grain and 268 pounds of tobacco. In terms of dollar values, each worker in 1943 produced more by \$339 worth of crops and \$666 worth of livestock and livestock products than he did in 1942.

A continuation of this high productivity for labor might be aided by a labor exchange program, whereby some of the labor on small farms could be used effectively on larger farms, especially during "peak load" labor periods such as seeding and harvesting. A factor to be considered is the increasing number of older men now on farms. These men are now carrying a very heavy labor load, and will of necessity become physically less effective as the war emergency period lengthens. Replacements for such workers seem unlikely until the war is over, so it seems probable that productions on farms dependent on such workers must sooner or later decline.

Machinery supplies adequate

Farm machinery seems adequate, at least for the 1944 crop season. Farmers in the Coon Creek area in 1943 purchased \$273 worth of new machinery per farm, or 13 per cent of their machinery and equipment inventories. In 1942 they purchased \$456 worth of new machinery, or 23 per cent of their machinery and equipment inventories. These purchases are larger than necessary for normal replacement purposes, so it seems reasonable to assume that the machinery on these farms is sufficient in amount and in good enough condition to satisfactorily meet the demands of the 1944 crop season. A further favorable factor is the recent increase in the steel allotment available for the manufacture of farm machinery.

Food production prospects for 1944

It seems probable that 1944 food productions will be no greater than those of 1943; in fact, they may be considerably less, depending almost completely upon the growing season this summer. An unfavorable growing season will not only reduce the farm productions of feed but also the available supply of purchased feeds from other areas.

One fourth of the 1943 livestock production was obtained from purchased feed. It seems certain that less purchased feed will be available to these farmers in 1944. For this reason if pasture and crop productions for 1944 are less, farm operators will of necessity have to reduce livestock numbers in accordance with these reduced feed supplies.

Liquidation of surplus hogs and poultry may be carried on more easily and with less serious effect on the organization of the farm than will the liquidation of much of the dairy herd. If the present trend in price relationships continues, this will be the wise thing to do.

Each individual farmer should watch his present feed supply, and carefully appraise his prospective production for 1944. As soon as he is aware of an impending feed shortage, he should reduce his livestock numbers. In the consideration as to the extent of this reduction, he should realize that it is unlikely that he can buy more feed during periods of feed shortage than he can when feeds are more abundant.

Reduced feed supplies will be particularly serious on relatively small farms where the operators have depended on purchased feed as a method of obtaining an adequate volume of business. It seems probable that the operators of these farms will soon be dependent on the livestock productions that can be obtained from the feeds grown on their limited acreage. This will emphasize the importance of getting the largest possible production by means of crop selection, a more liberal use of lime and commercial fertilizers, and of concentrating on those types of livestock that will usually give the largest return for feed. Ordinarily dairy cattle or poultry will return greater profits from feed than will hogs. Price relationships during the past 2 or 3 years, however, have been favorable to hog production. The result has been an enormous expansion of the hog industry.

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Table 3.--Detail of earnings, 26 farms, Coon Creek, 1943

	Your farm	Average 26 farms	5 highest profit farms	5 lowest profit farms
Receipts:				
Milk sales.....		5240	4337	2141
Cattle sales.....		588	595	508
Hog sales.....		759	1009	111
Poultry and egg sales..		619	942	294
Other livestock sales..		97	300	62
Government payments!...		260	216	113
Tobacco sales.....		267	120	200
Other crop sales.....		171	283	73
Miscellaneous incme...		269	523	149
Cash farm receipts..		6270	8330	3681
Produce used in home...		519	473	420
Inventory increase.....		632	1018	501
Gross farm receipts..		7421	9821	4602
Expenses:				
Feed purchased.....		724	726	250
Equipment & auto expense		388	423	271
Livestock expense.....		190	279	191
Crop expense.....		273	318	181
Labor hired.....		295	433	105
Real estate expense....		80	97	84
Taxes.....		183	223	161
Insurance and miscellaneous		90	82	48
Cash operating expense		2228	2581	1291
Livestock bought.....		380	797	377
Real estate improvomnt.		192	198	415
Equipment bought.....		273	404	146
Inventory decreases.....		75	--	66
Unpaid family labor.....		462	378	380
Board of hired labor....		150	224	65
Farm expense.....		3760	4582	2740
Net farm income.....		3661	5239	1862
Interest on investment..		830	1003	703
Operator's earnings...		2831	4236	1159

Net incomes 3 per cent higher than in 1942

The average net income on these 26 Coon Creek farms in 1943 was \$2831 compared with \$2299 in 1942, an increase of 23 per cent.

Gross farm earnings increased from \$6070 to \$7421 or 22 per cent. This was due in part to the increased productions of butterfat, poultry, and hogs previously mentioned, and in part to price increases of 32 per cent for butterfat, 20 per cent for poultry products, and 2 per cent for hogs.

Gross farm expenses, including interest on farm capital, increased from \$3771 in 1942 to \$4590 in 1943, or 22 per cent. One third of this increase was for purchased feed. All expense items, with the exception of taxes, showed increases over the preceding year.

The range in operator's earnings is great on these farms

The average operator's earnings on these 26 farms was \$2831. The range in earnings was from \$1159 for the 5 lowest profit farms to \$4236 for the 5 highest profit farms, a difference of \$3077. (see table 3)

Most of the difference in income was caused by differences in the volume of business. Cash receipts were larger by \$464.9, or 126 per cent. This larger volume of sales was due in part to larger farms, the high income farms having an average of 86 acres in crops in comparison with 51 acres for the low income farms. There were 44 live-stock units on the high income farms as compared with 27 units for the low income farms. (see tables 3 and 4)

Table 4.--Livestock numbers and production of butterfat hogs and eggs

	Your farm	Average 26 farms	5 highest income farms	5 lowest income farms
Cows number.....	_____	20.4	25.1	17.7
Other cattle, number.....	_____	13.7	16.0	13.3
Pork produced, cwt.....	_____	54.5	78.2	15.6
Poultry, number.....	_____	156.0	170.0	93.0
Sheep, number.....	_____	10.0	23.2	--
Productive livestock units	_____	33.8	43.8	26.6
Horses, number.....	_____	3.1	2.8	2.9
Butterfat produced, lbs...	_____	5062	5839	3554
Eggs produced, dozens.....	_____	1671	2365	623

The size of farms and the numbers of livestock did not account for all the difference in income, however, as the one group of farms averaged \$96 cash income per acre of crops, while the second group averaged but \$72. This difference was due in part to larger feed purchases by \$8 per livestock unit on the higher income farms. These farmers made more by buying more feed. They also had a larger butterfat production per cow by 28 per cent, and a larger return per dollar of feed consumed by 32 per cent than did the operator of the low income farms.

As a result of these differences between the two groups of farms, livestock productions were larger on the high income group by 64 per cent for butterfat, 400 per cent for pork, and 280 per cent for eggs.

The liberal feeding of dairy cattle is necessary for large production

The average butterfat production per cow was 249 pounds for the 26 farms, 307 pounds for the 5 highest producing herds and 190 pounds for the 5 lowest producing herds. (see table 6)

The higher productions were obtained by more liberal feeding. The higher producing cows received more feed than the lower producing cows by 189 pounds of concentrates and 1471 pounds of roughage. They also had access to somewhat better pastures. This liberal feeding paid well as is shown by a return above feed costs of \$147 per cow for the high producing animals as contrasted with but \$72 for those with low productions.

A relatively high level of feeding is desirable when feed supplies are ample as they have been for the past few seasons. If and when feed shortages develop, however, it will be desirable to cull the poorer producers so as to conserve feed for the better cows. A limited feed supply fed to good quality cows in the right amounts will return more to the farmer than would the same feed fed to a larger number of cows a part of which are inferior animals. The impending feed shortage will place particular emphasis on quality livestock and the best possible methods of feeding and general care. Dairy feeding specialists recommend that legume hay and silage be the foundation of the dairy ration. In addition, each cow should receive one pound of concentrates for every three or four pounds of milk produced, especially for good quality animals that are capable of a high level of production.

The proper feeding of the dairy calf also will become increasingly important as feed shortages develop. There is a considerable amount of experimental evidence to show that dairy calves can be raised satisfactorily with 400 to 600 pounds of whole milk, the smaller figure when skim milk is available and the larger amount when it is not. To feed more than this may prove uneconomical, especially at a time like the present when the price of milk is unusually high. A further consideration is the critical need of milk and its products for human consumption.

Self fed hogs on good pasture make the most economical gains

Hogs make the most rapid and economical gains when self fed on good pastures. Legume pastures are preferred, although oats and rape pasture is almost as satisfactory. The pasture lots should be rotated so that the same field will not be pastured more often than once every third year.

Table 8 shows that the farms with the highest returns over feed costs used only 324 pounds of concentrates in addition to skim milk and whey to produce 100 pounds of pork. In contrast, the farms with the lowest returns over feed costs used 742 pounds of concentrates for each 100 pounds of gain. The self feeding of corn and protein supplements on clean legume pastures, and the avoidance of losses from diseases and parasites by adhering to a sound sanitation program, helps make for a very considerable saving in feed.

Poultry production may be made to pay

Poultry production in recent years has expanded into an important enterprise on several of these farms and is a dependable source of income on most farms. The early hatching of pullets, the use of clean range, and the liberal feeding of the young birds until they start laying in the early fall seems to be the best means of assuring conditions for a heavy production of eggs during the fall, winter, and spring months. Some successful poultrymen sell all their old hens in the summer, usually in August when egg production falls to a low level. Other poultrymen, who seem to be equally successful, like to keep about 50 per cent of their better layers through the second winter, raising an equal number of pullets for replacements. This latter plan of management works out best in a divided poultry house that makes possible a separation of the hens and pullets. This separation of the old and young birds is particularly important in the early fall months when the pullets are too small to hold their own with the hens in physical combat and in the competition for feed and water.

Table 7 shows that the farms on which many of these practices were put into effect produced 169 eggs per hen, and the feed costs per hen were somewhat lower than those found on farms with an egg production less than half as great. The feed cost of 15¢ per dozen eggs for the farm flocks with the highest returns above feed costs in comparison with a feed cost of 43¢ per dozen for the farm flocks with the lowest returns, indicates very clearly the advantage enjoyed by farmers who used the most desirable poultry practices.

Farms with a high land use capability had higher crop yields

One important factor affecting farm earnings is largely independent of the managerial ability of the farm operators. This is the natural adaptability of each individual farm to a maximum crop production as measured by a land use capability rating. In the Coon Creek Area in 1943 the farms with the higher land use capability rating had larger crop yields by 5 bushels of corn, 4 bushels of oats, and $\frac{1}{2}$ ton of hay than did the farms with a low land use capability rating.

Coon Creek - 1943

	Land Use capability rating	Yields per acre		
		Corn bushels	Oats bushels	Hay tons
High land use capability	81	70	51	3.0
Low land use capability	68	65	47	2.5

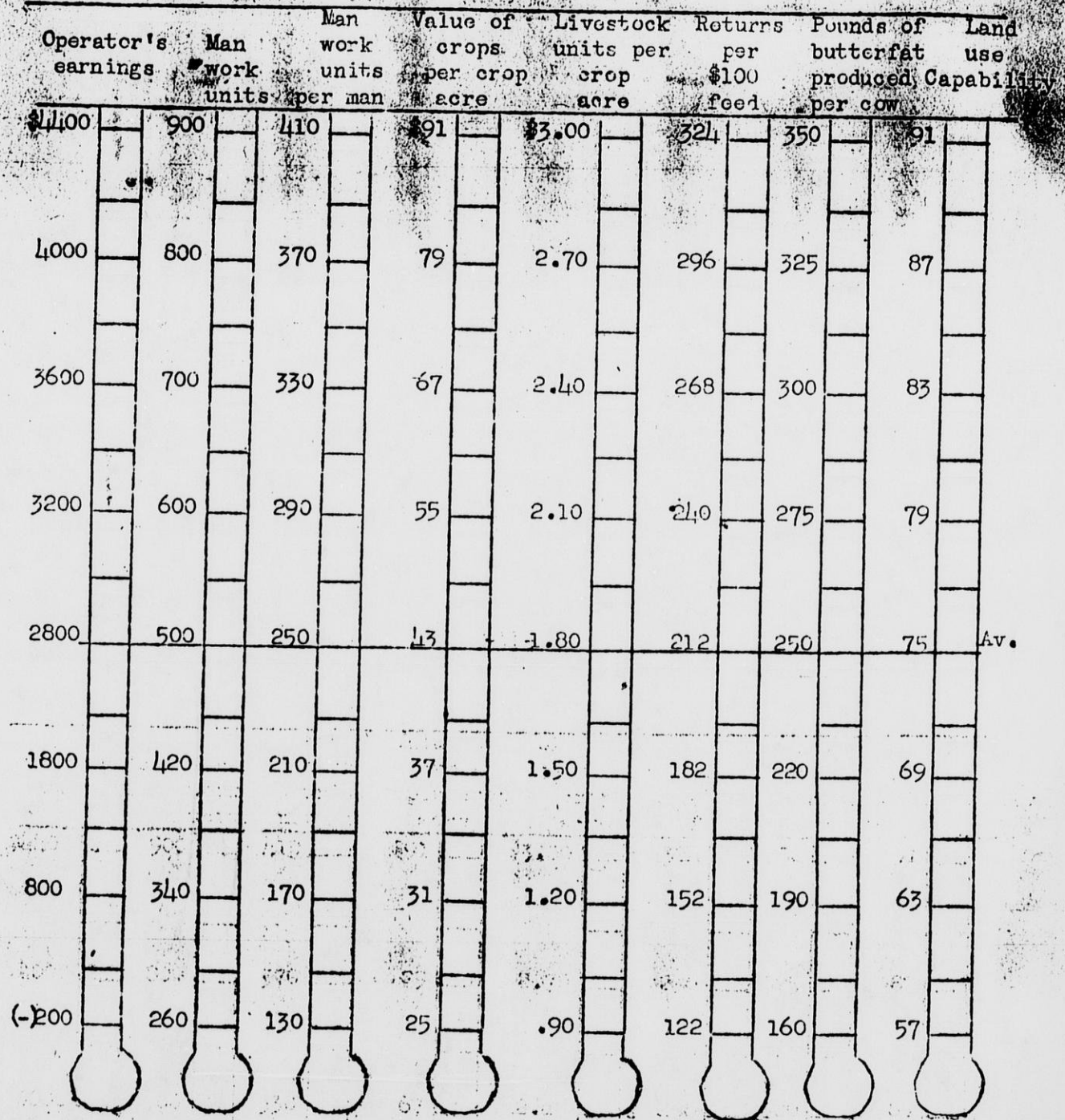


Figure 1.--A rating of average or better in most of these factors usually results in high operator's earnings.

Table 5 --- Feed cost and returns for sheep - Coon Creek, 1943

	Your farm	Average 5 farms
Number of ewes.....	_____	38
Number of lambs raised.....	_____	15
Pounds of feed per ewe		
Hay.....	_____	517
Corn silage and shreds.....	_____	277
Corn and small grain.....	_____	32
Value of feed per ewe (1)	_____	\$5.67
Net increase per ewe.....	_____	8.18
Returns above feed cost.....	_____	4.02
Returns per \$100 feed.....	_____	\$144

(1) Includes \$1.50 pasture charge per ewe

Table 6 --- Feed cost and returns from dairy cows, 26 farms Coon Creek, 1943

	Your farm	Average 26 farms	5 farms with highest B.F. per cow	5 farms with lowest B. F. per cow
Number of cows.....	_____	20.4	19.2	18.9
Butterfat sales per cow, pounds... _____	_____	225	279	164
Total B.F. produced per cow..... _____	_____	249	307	190
Price of B.F. per lb... _____	_____	\$.74	\$.74	\$.72
Pounds feed per cow				
Corn & small grain.. _____	_____	1324	1237	1353
Protein feed..... _____	_____	368	471	166
Total concentrates _____	_____	1692	1708	1519
Alfalfa hay..... _____	_____	862	772	670
Mixed hay..... _____	_____	3163	2873	2246
Soybean hay..... _____	_____	23	--	118
Total hay..... _____	_____	4048	3645	3034
Silage..... _____	_____	5530	7500	3737
Corn stover & straw. _____	_____	2.3	187	581
Total roughage*... _____	_____	6104	6332	4861
Pasture charge/..... _____	_____	\$6.74	\$7.07	\$6.07
Total feed cost..... _____	_____	\$76.46	\$80.23	\$63.45
Total value B.F. per cow _____	_____	\$184.04	\$227.22	\$135.92
Returns over feed cost.. _____	_____	107.58	147.00	72.47
Returns for \$100 feed.. _____	_____	241.00	283.00	214.00

* one-third total pounds silage

Table 7.--Feed cost and returns from poultry, Coon Creek, 1943

	Your farm	Average 28 farms	5 farms having highest returns over feed cost	5 farm having lowest returns over feed cost
Average number of hens.....	_____	156	170	93
Number of eggs per hen.....	_____	120	169	68
<u>Pounds feed per hen</u>				
Corn and small grain.....	_____	74	66	105
Commercial feed.....	_____	32	37	20
Total.....	_____	106	113	125
Skimmilk.....	_____	--	--	--
Feed cost per hen.....	_____	\$2.52	\$2.59	\$2.75
<u>Value of produce per hen</u>				
Eggs produced.....	_____	\$3.59	\$5.15	\$1.98
Poultry sales and increase.....	_____	.54	1.09	.28
Total credits per hen.....	_____	4.13	6.24	2.26
Returns over feed cost per hen	_____	1.61	3.65	(-) .49
Returns for \$100 feed.....	_____	\$164	\$241	\$82

Table 8.--Feed cost and returns from hogs, 18 farms, Coon Creek, 1943

	Your farm	Average 18 farms	6 farms having highest returns above feed cost	6 farms having lowest returns above feed cost
Pounds of hogs produced...	_____	7871	10963	2977
Average marketing weight..	_____	244	234	266
<u>Pounds of feed per cwt. hogs</u>				
Corn.....	_____	291	168	433
Small grain.....	_____	153	92	265
Protein supplement.....	_____	49	64	44
Total concentrates.....	_____	493	324	742
Skimmilk or whey.....	_____	414	698	---
Feed cost exclusive of pasture	_____	\$10.72	\$ 7.49	\$15.35
Price received for hogs...	_____	13.65	13.64	13.55
Returns above feed cost	_____			
per cwt.....	_____	2.93	6.15	(-) 1.80
Returns per \$100 feed.....	_____	\$127	\$182	\$88

Table 9.--Feed cost for horses, 24 farms, Coon Creek, 1943

	Your farm	Average 24 farms	4 highest profit farms	5 lowest profit farms
<u>Feed per horse</u>				
Grain, pounds.....	_____	873	1012	491
Hay, pounds.....	_____	4476	4984	5161
Fodder & stover, pounds	_____	167	---	600
Value of feed per horse...	_____	\$46	\$49	\$49
Number of horses.....	_____	3.7	3.5	2.9
Crop acres per farm.....	_____	64.6	81.6	50.9
Crop acres per horse.....	_____	17.5	23.3	17.6

Table 10.--Farm products used by the farm families, 26 farms, Coon Creek, 1943

	Your farm		Average 26 farms		5 highest profit farms		5 lowest profit farms	
	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value
Eggs, doz.....		\$	173	\$62	147	\$53	143	\$51
Poultry, lbs...			101	23	105	24	90	21
Milk, qts.....			1609	97	1395	84	2238	134
Cream, pts.....			29	5	11	2	48	9
Veal, lbs.....			99	12	131	16	180	21
Pork, lbs.....			353	48	254	35	201	28
Beef, lbs.....			29	3	--	--	150	16
Potatoes, bus..			18	20	14	16	15	17
Canned prod.qts			132	34	153	38	62	19
Garden produce			--	49	--	45	--	35
Wood, cords....			21	166	20	160	9	69
Average value per farm.....				519		473		420

Table 11.--Investment in real estate, machinery, supplies, feeds, productive livestock and horses, 26 farms, Coon Creek, 1943

	Your farm	Average 26 farms	5 highest profit farms	5 lowest profit farms
Crop acres.....		66.1	86.5	50.9
Land and buildings...		\$9864	\$11181	\$8827
Machinery and equipment		2030	2449	1517
Supplies.....		430	817	68
Feeds.....		1714	2549	1398
Productive livestock.		2283	2732	2020
Horses.....		287	321	230
Total investment...		16608	20049	14060

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Summary of Ten Years of Farm Records, 1934-43

The Soil Conservation Service in cooperation with the Wisconsin Agricultural Experiment Station started a farm record route in the Coon Creek Area in 1934 with 34 record keepers. A few of these records were discontinued in 1935 but others were added, bringing the total up to 50 for the year. From 33 to 45 records were completed in the succeeding years. Detail of earnings and miscellaneous production data for the ten-year period are shown in table 12.

Table 12.--Detail of earnings and miscellaneous data, Coon Creek, 1934-43

	1934-1936	1937-1939	1940-1942	1942	1943
Number of farms.....	43	44	38	33	26
Cash receipt.....	\$1827	\$2285	\$3714	\$4869	\$6262
Increase inventory.....	12	54	669	780	632
Farm products to home...	318	287	341	421	525
Gross farm earnings..	2157	2626	4754	6070	7419
Cash expense.....	600	1024	2037	2715	3295
Decrease in inventory...	145	118	--	--	--
Unpaid family labor.....	109	152	239	304	462
Farm expenses.....	854	1294	2276	3019	3757
Farm earnings.....	1303	1332	2478	3051	3662
Interest on investment..	583	644	689	752	830
Operator's earnings..	720	683	1789	2299	2832
Crop acres.....	53	59	62	61	66
Operator's earnings per crop acre.....	\$14	\$12	\$29	\$38	\$43
Value of crops per crop acre	24	21	28	35	43
Yield per acre, corn....	--	51	57	64	66
Yield per acre, oats....	--	30	39	41	48
Yield per acre, hay.....	--	1.7	2.1	2.3	2.7
Productive livestock units	26	28	29	31	34
Returns per \$100 feed...	\$150	\$180	\$237	\$230	\$212
Butterfat sales, lbs....	2738	3133	4018	4292	4601
Butterfat sales per cow.	177	194	225	226	225
Hog produced, lbs.	1721	1834	4617	5100	5450